

Submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts Communications Legislation Amendment
(Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

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Please quash this bill - it should not be allowed to pass.

There is no one body that should hold this type of power in any functioning democracy.

Rather, debate, scientific and otherwise should be encouraged.

This bill would result in the suppression of valid and important debate - an essential part of the process of innovation and uncovering truth, and essential to restore the damaged public confidence in public health policy.

Health Professionals have an obligation to speak out and share information that may be necessary and important in the process of needed reform of existing public health policies, and other policies. There are already significant obstacles to the sharing of information between different sectors, and this bill would make that situation far worse, further suppressing the free, necessary, and important speech of front-line health care workers and others.

The potential for abuse of the powers of this bill is great, and quite possibly unavoidable if it is passed in its current form and within its current framework. Corporate interests, like Pharmaceutical companies, Government at varying levels, and government departments are not immune to making mistakes, corruption and collaboration.

The government must never be held to be the final and absolute source of truth on an area which they govern, or this could easily result in harm to the public, and the disappearance of all public accountability by said government. Indeed, even valid concerns raised by an opposing political party could be held to be misinformation!!

No government should be allowed to enact a law that will virtually make it impossible for any opposing voices to the current political apparatus to be accessed and heard on any public platform, while simultaneously supporting and emphasising all political structures and organisations that will act as mouthpieces for the current government - this would be legally enforcing and endorsing the government being in a position to use propaganda on its own people and to be able to suppress any and all dissent with its position, no matter how mistaken or harmful the government's position.

This would destroy one of the safeguards of our democracy and is unacceptable.

Please do not allow this bill to enter into legislation - stop it in its tracks right now.