

*My feedback on an exposure draft of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.*

Though “misinformation and disinformation” may pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians (and possibly our “democracy”, “society” and “economy”), the absence of pertinent information poses a greater threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians.

The problem with regulation of information is that there is great likelihood that pertinent information may be censored.

In short, if any information can be removed as a result of pressure on platforms, in the form of “requirements”, “requests” or “enforce”ments for example, then no “balancing freedom of speech” is possible.

It has become clear that some information deemed “misinformation and disinformation” has in fact been misclassified and ultimately proven to be more accurate than the position of those who deemed it so.

For example, “lockdowns”, “masks” and even “safe and effective vaccines” were the government led narrative of the last few years. Anybody who questioned the benefit of these measures were silenced, fined, charged, sacked and labelled “conspiracy theorists”, “boof-heads” or “spreaders of misinformation and disinformation”. It is now clear these very measures in fact posed a great threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, our society and economy. One might say the Australian and State Governments were in effect the spreaders of “misinformation and disinformation” in this instance.

As there is no such thing as an “independent” regulator, there should be no powers provided by the Australian Government, to ACMA or any body, to determine what is “misinformation and disinformation”.

Regards,

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