

I am strongly against providing powers to the government (ACMA), or any government organisation to censor online articles, posts, comments and other online content. This includes powers to force big-tech companies to censor the views of Australians online, irrelevant of how "right" or "wrong" some may deem those views to be.

It is never the place of government to be the arbiters of truth and such a concept is simply incompatible with a democracy.

Additionally, the government claims that ... "Misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as to our democracy, society and economy." However, censoring so called misinformation and disinformation is actually more harmful, because it means those views are driven underground, and therefore the opportunity for rational individuals to challenge any disinformation is lost.

Further, some governments are notorious for lying themselves. There is the risk is that overzealous government officials could use this bill to suppress challenges to those lies and provide barriers to those who wish to point out those lies. For example, if a government official accepts bribes, could that government official force companies to remove content relating to that bribe, because they get to be the arbiter of what is true?

This Bill should never have even been conceived, let alone reach draft stage and be actually considered in any serious way.

Instead, we need a constitutional amendment that is similar to the American first amendment, so that the government may never again propose rules that would oppress our freedom of speech.