

20 August 2023

SUBMISSION TO (DITRDCA) COMBATING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION BILL 2023

I do not support the COMBATING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION BILL 2023.

I do not support the exemptions given to the government and the media.

This bill is a threat to our democratic society. A democratic society does not have government sanctioned "correct" information, with threats of fines for voicing opposing views.

What is mis- and dis-information? How is this being clearly defined?

Liberal and Labour political parties have differing opinions about what is information and dis/mis-information. Does previously censored information become un-censored with a change in political parties? Liberals tend to label climate change as disinformation and Labour sees it as true and correct. So, according to this Bill, the same information is both correct, as well as being mis/dis-information, simply with a change in government. In both cases, opposing the "official" viewpoint is likely to result in fines, and have nothing to do with what is correct and true. And in this case, only time will bring about the truth.

Mis-information is not necessarily wrong, however it differs from the predominant discourse. And significant changes to society as a whole have come about from opposing and "wrong" viewpoints. For example, Galileo vs the Church; and the old English saying "It is as certain as there are no black swans". Which was correct for a long while – until they discovered Australia and the black swan.

What is correct today can very easily be wrong tomorrow when newer information comes to light. And what is wrong today can very easily be right tomorrow when newer information comes to light.

The arbiters of the truth, as determined by this Bill, have no potential to know accurately what is true versus what is mis- and dis-information. This Bill is simply about the suppression of the opposing viewpoint. And therefore about the stifling of growth within our society, the shutting down of critical thinking and the banning of freedom of expression and political association.