

Dear Officer

"The Issue" section on the website seeking input states:

"Misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as to our democracy, society and economy."

On the contrary, *government interference in free speech and communication between citizens* poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, and *especially* to our democracy, society and economy.

This is the most frightening piece of legislation that I am aware has been proposed during my whole life as an Australian (██████████). Am I living in North Korea now?

Critical questions that have been left unanswered are:

1. Who decides what constitutes "misinformation"?

Today's misinformation is often tomorrow's truth. This is the nature of information - knowledge progresses via discussion, evaluation, debate and considering opposing viewpoints. We have a wonderful opportunity though digital media to engage in this and contribute to it. At best, it seems very arrogant of government/ACMA to consider themselves the sole arbiters of what is accurate information. At worst, it seems a giant step towards a totalitarian nightmare.

2. Who decides whether content is "disinformation"?

How do you know whether content is "reasonably likely to cause or contribute to serious harm".

It could likely be argued that any information (and especially professional news) could be reasonably likely to be seriously harmful to someone's mental health.

3. Why is professional news content excluded? Why are governments and government educational institutions excluded?

There is no rationale or evidence to show that these bodies are any more reliable than private citizens when it comes to providing accurate information. If there are going to be rules, they should apply equally to everyone.

The draft Bill definitely does **not** strike a balance on freedom of expression. It entirely removes freedom of expression online, and limits expression to anything the "Ministry of Truth" (aka ACMA) approves at the time.

A bill that allows a government agency to require private corporations to spy on individuals and "keep records" pertaining to communications between them has no place in a liberal democracy.

Sincerely  
Anita Swift

