

This proposed Bill is extremely misguided and completely inappropriate for the modern age of information overload, structurally undermines democracy, violates implied human rights and won't work.

In summary, I object on the following grounds, which I note encompass but a surface-scratching list of issues fundamental, legal & social with this Bill.

GOVERNMENT IS NOT THE ARBITER OF TRUTH

- This bill is Orweillian, in defining what is/isn't acceptable speech by Government fiat
- What is Truth? This is a central debate of philosophy:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/>
- It's not possible to define truth, and hence misinformation or disinformation, in any practical way, let alone in an unbiased way.
- Even if it were possible, it's not desirable (see below).

IT VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS

- It undermines implied freedom of speech (although I will note a separate and related issue that Australia lacks a Bill of Rights enshrining such, we are still bound by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights per the UN

IT UNDERMINES DEMOCRACY

- A Free Press is essential to Democracy. History abounds with examples. In the modern social era, the "Press" is often either the citizenry themselves, independent media, or the former picked up by traditional media on platforms such as Twitter/X.
- If this Bill were in place historically, how many of the following revelations would have never happened?
 - The Watergate scandal
 - The Pentagon Papers
 - Wikileaks' revelations of war crimes across the 5 Eyes via Snowden, Manning & others
 - Witness K exposing the Australian Government's crimes in PNG
 - Would Erin Brokovich have happened? Would she have had access to the information she needed if it was deleted?
 - Abu Graib - surely dangerous disinformation undermining national security?
 - Jeffrey Wigand taking on the tobacco industry - after all, those 7 CEOs and their government and media lackies all said it was safe & effective, sound familiar?
 - Hunter Biden's laptop
 - Joe & Hunter Biden's financial corruption in Ukraine (these last two were already significantly delayed)
 - This is just the tip of the iceberg

IT DOESN'T WORK AND IS DANGEROUS

- Many Australians read Bertolt Brecht's Galileo in School as part of their VCE, or at minimum know the story. With this bill in place, Galileo's revelations, per the Scientific Method no less, of heliocentrism, would have been deemed misinformation. Indeed, they were in his day and he nearly paid the ultimate price, but for a false recantation.
- Further, ALL development of the Scientific Method follows the arc of thesis > antithesis and of publication, peer review and debate. This could be quelled under this Legislation for any inconvenient truth.

- At various points, people generally and health/government/centralised authorities in particular believed all of the following:
 - The earth is flat
 - Leeches cure many ails
 - Plagues are caused by miasma
 - Lobotomies cure mental illness
 - Exorcism cures mental illness
 - Sterilisation is an appropriate cure for being black or gay
 - Infection could be cured with heavy metal poisoning
 - Asbestos is an appropriate insulation material.
 - Eggs cause cholesterol. Cholesterol causes heart attacks. (There are three different types of cholesterol which this doesn't distinguish - perfect example actually. We're already over-prescribing statins as a result, but at least the medical literature is emerging that this is the wrong approach, and some doctors are doing otherwise, only prescribing them when matched to the appropriate circumstance and otherwise implementing diet-based remedies which actually work. This would likely be censored as disinformation, not just misinformation, due to perceived harms of not prescribing said statins).
 - Sugar is good for you
 - Smoking is good for you
 - The food pyramid should comprise mostly carbohydrates
 - Consuming fat is bad
 - Consuming low fat high sugar food is good
 - Glyphosate is perfectly safe
 - Aspartame is perfectly safe
 - Sulphites are perfectly safe (the real reason processed meat is bad, not the meat per se)
 - And THOUSANDS of other such health and food-related statements, many of which persist around the world today. They are only in many cases recently being corrected, such as with sulphites and aspartame.
 - We can't even agree on basics like meat, vegetables, alcohol, carbs, fats, sugars or basically anything at a macro level, let alone a micro. How does one decide misinformation here? It's definitionally political.
- Censorship of anything but absolute mathematical truth guarantees getting it wrong, likely far more often than getting it right. This slows down or eliminates the feedback loops that are necessary for truth correction. Even if it were censoring argument against absolute mathematical truth, it slows down or eliminates the feedback loops necessary for LEARNING and hence correction applied to future problem domains and situations.

ONE WORKED EXAMPLE - COVID MISINFORMATION & DISINFORMATION

- At various points, all of the following arguments were considered misinformation and/or disinformation and censored, at the behest of Governments worldwide including the Australian Government:
 - The virus spreads via surface transmission
 - Vaccines will be mandated
 - COVID originated in a lab
 - The US Government funded said lab
 - There are more labs in Ukraine
 - COVID was a product of Gain of Function research
 - COVID Vaccines don't prevent infection

- COVID Vaccines don't prevent disease progression
- COVID Vaccines don't prevent severe illness or death
- Ivermectin, HCQ and other off-label drugs have been shown in real world practice to significantly reduce if not prevent COVID infection and/or severe disease progression
- The spike protein is neurotoxic
- Masks reduce transmission
- Cloth masks and surgical masks reduce transmission
- N95 masks non-fit-tested reduce transmission
- Lockdowns don't work
- Social distancing doesn't work
- The virus can't easily spread outdoors
- Two doses is not enough
- Three doses is not enough
- The vaccines do not provide long-lasting protection, with protection likely to last 8-12 weeks at most
- The definition of a vaccine was changed to turn the COVID gene therapeutics into a vaccine
- COVID Vaccines are not safe and effective
 - Specifically, they have the highest adverse reaction rate of any vaccine, moreso than every other such product combined
 - There is a generally accepted UNDER-reporting factor in passive surveillance systems of at least 42X, often 100X (yet the TGA still maintains an over-reporting factor by the same margin, with no evidence)
 - All cause mortality is higher in direct correlation with the vaccine rollout and not covid cases, as is especially evident in data from WA where all cause mortality rose while the virus was non-existent, as well as from other data like Victoria, NSW & NZ where the % of infected population to date was far less than the % of the vaccinated population
- The COVID vaccine is not safe for pregnant women
- The COVID vaccine is not safe for children (subsequently banned in many jurisdictions)
- The COVID vaccine shows evidence of gene splicing
- The vaccine does indeed spread from the injection site
- The vaccine does cause modification to your DNA
- The mRNA in the vaccine continues to produce spike proteins for weeks
- These spike proteins travel around the modify
- The vaccines are causing an alarming uptick in myo and pericarditis
- Vaccine-derived immunity is not greater and longer-lasting than naturally acquired immunity.
- Natural immunity should be considered as equivalent or better to having received a vaccine dose for the purpose of vaccine passports.
- The vaccine is safe to extend past its original shelf life if stored properly
- Young people and sportspeople are dying suddenly in statistically significant increased numbers

This is an incomplete list and just off the top of my head.

- In several cases, these statements were based on previous global consensus of developed pandemic response plans, which were largely thrown out the window the moment COVID arrived.

- In many cases, the people making such posts were qualified doctors or other medical experts, and were referencing peer-reviewed studies and/or government data sources.
- Every single one of those claims has subsequently been proven true, yet in some of these cases, Governments are still denying this. Since Elon Musk took over Twitter, their backdoor censorship regime has suffered a breach, and now many of these arguments and the data supporting them are gaining hold. With this Bill in place, that would be much harder and take longer, if at all, with a very real human toll.
- Even the NY Post was deplatformed from Twitter for two weeks for merely suggesting the virus *may* have originated in the Wuhan Lab.
- The Hunter Biden laptop story is another example, which arguably changed the result of the 2016 US Election due to Government-initiated censorship and wrongdoing by dozens of Federal employees.
- There are myriad examples here: <https://stoppingsocialism.com/2023/01/the-twitter-files-comprehensive-summary-analysis-and-discussion-of-ramifications-for-american-institutions/>
- I've listed sometime or somewhat controversial topics that have subsequently been proven true, even to a significant degree in mainstream media. If the Government and fAcT cHeCkErS cannot get these truths right during the most heightened period of attention and funding in our lifetimes, there is zero chance they will get it right in any other conditions. Indeed, this is an exemplary indicator of why it's simply not possible. Some of the above truths were not known, or indeed not possible to know early on. Some were. But for the ones that were not, these positions were shut down by censorship even for the mere suggestion or investigation thereof.

IT'S ENTIRELY BACKWARDS IN HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

- The problems of mis/disinformation are not solved by centralising authority, but by increasing trust. We need only look at the recent COVID era (examples above) to witness the massive decline in trust of government and media organisations as a, now provably, result of their own spreading of misinformation and disinformation. This is reflected in polls of trust in Government and Health Agencies, doctors, and media organisations in 2022 and 2023 as compared with 2019 and earlier.
- One increases trust by speaking candidly, sharing data, and changing their position as new evidence emerges, not doggedly persisting with previously held dogma or beliefs and censoring dissenting thought, even if said thought is backed up by the highest standards of rigour in the Scientific Method.
- In a world of information abundance, misinformation and disinformation is always going to exist. The very forces that spread it also enable GOOD information to spread. We, as the human race, need to move on from a world of information scarcity to a world of information abundance and change our approach 180 degrees. The right strategy for dealing with abundance is not censorship - even if this were accurate, it's a game of whack-a-mole on an infinitely expanding canvas. It's with increasing trust. And for every censorship decision that is wrong, this DECREASES trust, rather than increases it. Using the mathematical concept of entropy, this guarantees the system diverges rather than converges over time, and is hence not structurally sound and ultimately doomed to spiral out of control and into chaos (in the mathematical sense) if unbound.
- This is similarly backwards to the understanding of the Internet and an abundance of information vs scarcity of information, as well as bottom-up vs top-down information dissemination, in the Australian Government's pre-COVID Murdoch Protection Bill (aka Australian Media Bargaining Code) which mistakenly (per my submission) attributed the flow of value as occurring from media organisations to Facebook and Google, when in fact

it was the complete reverse. Simple evidence of this is that if media organisations did not want Facebook and Google to access their content, they could have blocked this with one line in robots.txt for Google and a one-line firewall rule for Facebook. I mention this because it shows that the Australian Government clearly does not understand the context of information abundance, as the same conceptual and structural error is showing up here, with far more dastardly consequences.

- Think about deepfakes - the right approach isn't to try to weed them out. This may appear to work in the beginning. The right approach is to do two things - a) train people to recognise them (education) and b) increase the trustworthiness of original sources. This Bill takes the opposite approach to both aspects.

POTENTIAL NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS BILL

- The consequences of getting COVID wrong are ALL of the following:
 - The consequences of lockdowns on mental, economic & social health, as well as suicides
 - Developmental and educational delays in children due to lockdowns
 - Deaths from COVID
 - Deaths from delayed diagnoses
 - Deaths from vaccines, directly and indirectly via compromised immune function
 - Current inflation (in large part) due to supply chain disruption and excessive use of stimulus funding
 - Negative health & social outcomes from increased distrust in Government, Science & Health authorities
- COVID could quite easily have been solved and the deaths associated with COVID AND the vaccines with the right combination of prophylactic use of ivermectin alongside appropriate vitamins (esp Zinc) in the right doses, at the right times, as evidenced by hundreds of doctors publishing about this, including one in India who successfully treated over 2,000 patients with this approach without a single hospitalisation. This information was available in 2020, but is still censored, still sidelined and still not properly part of the scientific process towards getting this right, but is emerging.
- The COVID vaccines were only approved, and their dastardly consequences possible due to Emergency Use Directives which required there be no pre-existing product suitable for off-label use. This was not the case, so the Pharmaceutical companies ran a deliberate disinformation campaign to discredit this drug. Due to regulatory capture and the ability to fund traditional media, such disinformation would be essentially exempt under this Bill.
- By my calculation, factoring in the above, focusing purely on the economic cost and death cost (ignoring other costs listed above), we are looking at around \$20 Trillion in Economic Loss and approx 15 million excess deaths (either from COVID itself or the vaccines). This can and will happen again if information is stifled and progress slowed. At the very least, we should be curious about alternative approaches that may prevent this kind of devastation, regardless of its cause, not reaching straight for the ban hammer.
- Broadening this bill to all discourse could have far worse impacts than just Public Health. We are talking the entire fabric of society, at the whim of some Government employees and their economically indentured social media companies to determine absolute truth where doing so is not only not possible, but dangerous and with broad-reaching and long-lasting disbenefits and negative externalities.
- Stymied Innovation & decreased investment in Australian innovation, especially in new areas of health or science that go against established ways of operating
- Enshrines the kind of psychological abuse and gaslighting the likes of which we saw in the State of Victoria during COVID.

- Turns science into Scientism, a religion of science, not a process; sending us back to the Middle Ages
- It will not work and will further decrease trust in Government and Media especially, who are exempt from the Bill and will have a dual role of both truth censor and misinformation spreader.

THE EXEMPTIONS GUARANTEE TARGETED POLITICAL APPLICATION

- Exempting the Government and Traditional Media from this Bill is hypocritical and further perpetuates the false and damaging paternalistic view of “keeping us safe”. Only the truth will keep us safe, which this Bill guarantees to stifle and delay at best and prevent at worst.

IT VIOLATES MATHS

- The only universal truth is maths. This is why some people spend all their lives focusing on “proofs”. Computers reduce to maths. Arguments reduce to maths. Everything else is but a proxy for the truth. But even then, maths, and its close cousin physics are constantly evolving. We previously thought Newtonian Physics was truth. Now we can’t even agree what is true in Quantum Physics and have been arguing about it for decades. That argument is healthy, not to be the target of censorship.
- Scientific debate in other areas is FAR removed from this kind of universal truth. If it’s not possible to determine absolute truth in Quantum Physics, it’s definitely not possible to do it in an evolving health crisis.

(NET) HARMS ARE NOT CAUSED BY THE PRESENCE MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

- Net Harms are caused by the stifling of free speech. Sure, there may be *transient* benefit to stamping out truly mathematically provably correct mis/disinformation, such that this prevented a harmful outcome. However, the price of so doing is to stamp out more truthful information and to slow the speed of information flow which has been associated with increased innovation, productivity and dissemination of knowledge and human betterment. The costs of delaying and/or denying this are infinitely larger. And that’s assuming the censorship was correct in the first place, which per the above it often isn’t, and most recently decidedly was not.
- The presence and application of these laws will only decrease Trust in information from centralised authorities. This shifts alternative viewpoints underground. A simple example of this is Ivermectin. Some stories of serious harm or death were associated with this drug. This is because some people took HORSE DOSES of the drug, clearly overdosing, because they were not able to access it through appropriate channels. Recent reports show GP visits are down 23% in Australia and everybody is scratching their heads wondering why. I know why. A significant percentage of people don’t trust them anymore, and of those that do, they have limited the scope of that trust. We should have already learned this lesson from the hugely ineffective war on drugs.

Note: Please forgive any typos or unfinished sentences. This was written in the final hours before submission after becoming aware of such, leaving insufficient time to fully edit.