

Introduction

This bill poses many implications to freedom of speech and allows some parties to deliberately spread misinformation. Below explains some of the implications that this bill may cause.

What is truth?

To know if something is misinformation you first need to know what the truth is. Even Science, our greatest tool for understanding the world, avoids using declarations of truth (because there is always holes in our knowledge). This bill defines misinformation but lacks definitions about what truth is.

In relation to truth:

- What is the methodology that the ACMA will use to arrive to truthful conclusions?
- Who is deciding what is truth (Is it a small group of people that decide truth, or a large group of people)?
- Is the ACMA independent from the government in arriving at truth?
- Will the ACMA be providing a list of truth claims that can't be challenged?
- Is there a process by which you can challenge their truth claims?
- Will the ACMA be providing confidence level on their truth claims? (because there is nothing that we know 100% of on any subject).
- If the ACMA declare something a misinformation, when it is correct information, how will the ACMA correct their misinformation?
- What is the penalty for the ACMA for assisting misinformation?
- Will people who were fined get their money back (if their statements are shown to correct)?

Exemptions

The exemptions allow parties to tell misinformation, without opposition or penalty. The reasoning isn't explained in the bill. It could be that:

1. The exempt parties don't know the truth.
2. They aren't willing to tell the truth
3. They know the truth but can't communicate it in a truthful way.
4. They think the truth will bring harm.

All parties should tell the truth (so there shouldn't be an exemption list). In relation to 4, if misinformation is being spread by exempt parties, then the public should be able to call it out. The ACMA should not be able to fine anyone for speaking out against it. If the ACMA is going to take the position of truth experts, if they aid misinformation they should be punished.

Added to the exemption list

One party that should be added to the exemption list is the public's personal experience. For example if the agenda being pushed is that "This product is safe and effective", and your experience is that you got sick after using it, you should be allowed to publicly say it.

How the exemption list could be used

Exempted parties could use their position to push misinformation, they could do it to:

- Push an agenda
- Cause economic harm to competing companies
- Silence lobby groups
- Support corrupt behaviour by limiting public knowledge
- Reduce general public knowledge

Bill could cause harm

If misinformation is said by an exempt party, and the ACMA enforce that misinformation as truth it will cause real and lasting harm to society. It could cause:

- Economic harm to businesses
- Create Taboo topics
- Create stress in society, where the individual may know better information, but they aren't allowed to tell it.
- Root misinformation in our society as the misinformation will be protected.

Partial Misinformation

How will the ACMA handle information that is only partially correct?

If an exempt party says "UV light doesn't kill viruses", can the public explain that there are 3 types of UV light, A,B, and C, and C has been shown to be very effective against virus (just don't shine it directly onto your skin). Should the ACMA be able to force changes onto exempt groups to correct their misinformation (so they may be exempt from fines, but not from telling the truth).

Suggestions

Don't go ahead with this bill.

If you are going ahead:

- Add personal experience to the exemption list.
- Give options to individuals rather than fining:
 - take down misinformation
 - upload correct information to the same degree they published the false information
 - allow the individual to upskill so they don't fall prey to the same behaviour. This could be taking courses on logic, reasoning, scepticism, scientific method, etc.
- If the ACMA incorrectly enforces misinformation they should have strikes against them. 20 strikes and the ACMA is dissolved.
- Allow the public to call out misinformation spoken by the exempt parties.

Conclusion

The bill can cause more harm to society than what it is trying to solve. Good intentions may be on the forefront of the bill, but as the saying goes "The road to hell is paved with good intentions".

The writer thinks the bill is more about pushing agendas and squashing free speech than promoting truth.