

SUBMISSION

My name is Margaret Chant, and I am an [REDACTED] year old mother and grandmother. I wish to make a submission regarding the above Bill, as I understand you have called for feedback about its contents.

I believe the proposed Bill would enable the Australian Communications and Media Authority to force digital platforms to monitor and censor any content which the Government considers to be mis- or disinformation, and which could, in their opinion, have the potential to cause serious harm to the population. I can see that the original motive for this legislation might have been laudable, to prevent harm or discord to the vulnerable, but I'm afraid that the proposed means of bringing this about is far too heavy handed, and sounds more like a totalitarian, controlling autocracy than a true democracy.

For example, who will decide what information is likely to "cause serious harm"? The definition of "harm" is very subjective, and this should not be left to the judgment of some anonymous member of the ACMA to decide. There does not appear to be any provision for scrutiny or checking of these, possibly life-changing, decisions. I also understand that the digital platforms could face huge fines if they are found to have allowed such mis- and disinformation to appear in their social media: this would undoubtedly cause them to be extremely cautious about what they publish, and could make it much more difficult to post anything which did not agree with the prevailing Government agendas.

I am very disappointed that the Government feels the need to curtail our freedoms in this way. Surely people should be allowed to be treated as grown-ups, and not as children who have to be protected from every possible harm. We should have the freedom to make up our own minds; we may not always make the right decisions, but we should have the freedom to do so! Australia is known as a free country, and I feel sorry for the many migrants and refugees who come to our country from very restrictive and totalitarian lands, believing they will find true freedom here, if they were to then discover that we are not nearly as "free" as they expected. That would really be a tragedy, and not the legacy the current Government would like to leave.

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