

Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

I am an 80 year old Australian, born in Kyabram Victoria of parents whose ancestors arrived here in 1842 and 1840 respectively. Freedom of speech is one of the hallmarks of a free and democratic nation. This was once true of Australia but these freedoms have been greatly eroded of recent years. This troubles me deeply as I see my beloved country sliding further and further toward what the Nazis became in Germany in the 1930's. For this reason and those below I strongly oppose the bill. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right of every Australian. This proposed "misinformation" law is an attack on our basic human rights by a government that is supposed to uphold those rights, not stifle them.

The government is attempting to place upon itself an impossible burden of objectivity. No government body has the wisdom or ability to sort out what is true and what isn't. We've never had so much information available at our fingertips in all of human history. The amount of information that can be accessed online is incredibly vast. What group of bureaucrats could possibly discern truth from falsehood on every subject?

The bill's stated aim is to keep Australians from "harm". Preventing harm is a good thing. The problem is that the proposed law will ultimately do great harm itself. One example is the recent pandemic and the question of where COVID-19 originated. The official line was that it came from nature and that the lab origin was "misinformation" that could "harm" our relationship with China.

Now we have learned that the virus likely did come from the Wuhan lab. What was once called "misinformation" is now quite possibly the truth! The question of COVID-19's origin is vital so that we can avoid a repeat scenario. Censoring truthful reporting about the lab leak theory will itself cause "harm" by preventing us from learning from our mistakes.

With this one example, we can see how the proposed "misinformation" law will increase "harm" even as it seeks to reduce it.

The bill is misguided and must be rejected.

