

Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

This proposed bill to combat “misinformation and disinformation” must be wholly rejected.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental right within our Australian society, including the right to put one's opinion forward and debate that opinion. That right MUST be protected, and MUST NOT be denied by authoritarian rule.

If the last three years during the pandemic have taught us anything, it's that top-down, heavy-handed approaches by governments ultimately do not promote trust in our institutions but degrade it. Public trust in our governments and media outlets is low, evidenced by the decreased primary vote for the two major political parties and slumping media ratings.

This bill will achieve the opposite effect of its intended purpose. Its authoritarian approach will decrease trust in our governments. This will prove disastrous for our country and will foster disunity.

One very concerning aspect of the bill is that content authorised by the government would be exempt. It is incredible that a government would be willing to make a law and exempt itself from that law. This bill proposes one rule for the government and a different rule for everyone else. Such contempt for the Australian people the government is supposed to serve must be condemned.

This is the kind of proposal that someone might expect under a Soviet-style regime. Not in Australia.

