

The purpose of these comments is not to address the "nitty gritty" aspects of this Bill, but to lodge my opposition to moves by any government to limit free speech on social media platforms. Such centralisation of power and control inevitably steers us away from a healthy democracy, not a better one.

The irony of the zeitgeist, is that this current government is pushing an Indigenous Voice, but simultaneously wants to remove the "Voice" of those who they deem unfit to be heard across social media platforms. Such hypocrisy should be writ large.

Would those voices who proclaimed Iraq had no WMD be deemed misinformation under the proposed Bill? Would it censor views that our participation in military action against the Iraqi peoples is against International Law? One only has to peruse the historical record to find the many instances where the "official narrative" never stood the test of time. One would think if we are truly progressing politically, the legislature would recognise errors of the past.

However, certainly in the shadow of this Bill, it appears that many minds have moved into retrograde. We only have to assess the more recent event of Covid to realise that once again the centralised narrative is replete with its own falsehoods, and that the censoring of dissenting voices has led to huge unnecessary economic, psychological and health impacts on the Australian people. I do not need to espouse the massive fracture that has eventuated in Australian Society, despite many government official purposely ignoring the elephant in the room.

I am sure many submissions will relate to the Orwellian overtones of this Bill, and invoke the dreaded "Ministry of Misinformation" analogy - and for justifiable reasons. We cannot be fearful of expressing our views, a true democracy depends upon it. It is not up to the government of the day to filter the spectrum of ideas, while at the same time excluding itself as possibly a disseminator of its own disinformation/misinformation. It is incredible, to have to point this out!

In finishing, I trust the "VOICE of REASON" will triumph in the end.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Rod Farrell

PS. This letter can be published