

Attachments:

[Submission \(disinformation, misinformation legislation\) Aug2023.docx](#);

To whom it may concern

Attached is a Word document outlining my feedback on the proposed laws on misinformation/disinformation.

Regards.

Greg Wheeler

Proposed legislation for control of disinformation and misinformation on digital platforms

A submission on the proposed legislation

In section 7 (1) (a), when defining what is meant by disinformation, it states that any content that “false, misleading or deceptive”...

I would like to know who or what body will be the one deciding whether or not content is *false*. There were many instances during the Covid-19 pandemic when the government decided that persons were propagating false information regarding the effectiveness of certain drugs in being able to deal with the symptoms of Covid-19. As a result, they forced the social media platforms to censor these comments. Many of the comments have since proven to be correct. Once the content has been banned from the platform it makes it very difficult to reinstate it when the government has proven to be wrong in its determination, thus depriving many people from being able to be informed of alternative opinions or facts.

Who or what body decides if the content is *deceptive* or *misleading*?

A further aspect of the definition is if the content “is reasonably likely to cause or contribute to serious harm”.

Again: who or what is the body that decides that the content is likely to cause or contribute serious harm?

I believe that the definitions of harm are too broad: who decides if content is harmful to the Australian environment? And what constitutes this harm to the environment? A person may believe that a farmer building dams on their property to capture rainwater for future use on the farm is harmful to the environment if the dam is being constructed in a valley, or some such land feature.

Excluded content: section (e) (i), (ii) , (iii) and (iv)

This definition states that the various levels of government are excluded from being held accountable for misleading and deceptive content if that content is “authorized” by these levels of government. They should NOT be excluded from being held accountable especially given that they were some of the main contributors to misleading information during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Prime Minister recently stated in parliament that the Uluru Statement from the Heart was “1 A4 page” (as he waved it about). Megan Davis has stated that the document is actually 18 pages long. Surely what the PM was saying constitutes disinformation. Therefore whatever is said or propagated by every level of government should **NOT** be considered as excluded content.

In summary: I am totally against this legislation as I believe that it infringes on the rights of all Australian citizens to be able to express their opinions on social media platforms. Most people will read and

interpret content on social media with a discerning eye and either seek clarification from the person posting the content and ask them as to the source of their information. Most Australian citizens are able to discern what constitutes misinformation and/or disinformation. And those who are unable to discern the difference will not be better off with this legislation. I recommend that the people proposing the legislation withdraw it forthwith.

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