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Tanya Braithwaite

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09-07-2023

SUBMISSION FOR THE Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

Dear Ministers

This Bill is an overreach so far into the private business of free speech that I feel will change the way media is presented forever. Over the past 3 years we have heard the words “misinformation” and “disinformation” used in media forums and news in place of what we used to call “debate”.

If mis and disinformation is untruth then who decides what is ‘truth’. This is starting to sound resoundingly Orwellian. The Ministry of Truth perhaps?

Over the past 3 years we have seen a growing censorship in social media to bias information that people are exposed to. We have witnessed a growing supply of evidence that demonstrated that the ‘main stream media’ ran with the only allowable narrative offered by this Government and any other information was considered a conspiracy theory. We have shared information from an original source and had it determined to be misinformation. We have constantly had Facebook bans and censorship despite appealing and being ignored. We have seen how these censorship rules operate and they don’t work. They stifle debate and free speech. We have been on the receiving end of this censorship and we understand that this Draconian Bill is about nailing it to the wall. Nailing the one and only narrative. No debate, no consultation, no independent arbitration and no free speech.

Over the past 3 years I have lost faith in the Government to act in a way that is transparent and is of good service to the people for the people.

First of all, who is the god like arbiter that determines what is mis or disinformation? Is there only one bearer of truth? Who’s truth? Who decides what is the truth?

Secondly this Bill seems to give ACMA the power and authority of judge and jury. How is this able to be given? Under who’s authority? The Government of Australia or the Government of the Commonwealth?

Thirdly, there seems to be no course of appeal to any decision that ACMA would come to determining the truth. How in any democratic society is this finality acceptable?

Who exactly is ACMA and how are they going to identify the truth to be able to decide what is the truth and what is not. Where will they get their information from? Which person will be responsible or making each decision. Can they be held accountable for making that decision or will they hide behind the ACMA authority? So many questions, so little faith

This Bill is outrageous in its intention and should be immediately binned. This Bill should not see the light of day.

Sincerely,

Tanya Braithwaite