

My submission concerning the Misinformation Bill

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sat, 19 Aug 2023 21:29:22 +1000

I am greatly concerned by the draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 and its potential impact on free speech.

The necessity of this legislation is certainly questionable when speech crimes such as defamation and inciting violence are already outlawed. The startling difference between this bill and these existing laws is that it can effectively be used to shut down all kinds of lawful discussions about social issues. Some examples include the discussion regarding biological men being able to identify as female and enter women's private spaces, global warming, the safety of vaccines, etc. To me, the bill's primary purpose seems to be the eradication of political beliefs deemed contrary to the mainstream.

This bill has also unsurprisingly chosen the most effective form of censorship – threatening private companies with massive fines if they are caught allowing so-called “mis/disinformation” on their platforms. Indeed, threats of large fines will result in much more censorship than if this bill simply sought to prosecute individuals. Having private corporations simply cancel people's accounts is also much safer for the government compared to confronting individuals and risking being called out for governmental overreach.

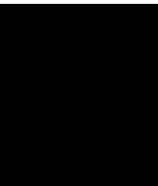
The definitions contained in the draft bill are also outrageously vague and subjective. It loosely defines harm as hate speech, disruption of public order, harm to government, harm to public health, the environment, and economy (p.10). This is a broader attack on free speech than anything hitherto – including not just harm to people but “to the Australian environment” as well! Another concerning part of this definition of harm is the word “disruption”, which could easily be weaponised to prevent legitimate robust debate or to censor any political views which are opposed to ruling orthodoxy.

The hope that this bill will be used only for good – when it can so easily be used for unjust censorship – I think is naïve. Anyone who has studied history should know that we can never afford to put our trust in the inherent good of any leadership group when there are no proper safeguards in place.

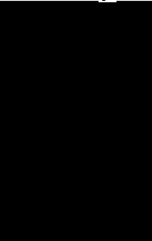
Thank you for considering my submission. I hope you will be convinced that freedom of speech and the open exchange of ideas are non-negotiable.

Yours faithfully,

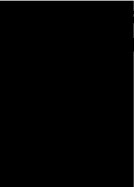
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Christine
Mounsey



Kathrine
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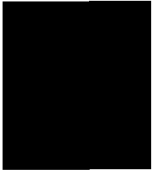


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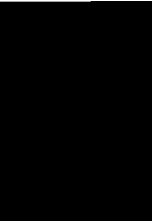
McIntyre



Mrs
Margaret
Stanford



Mr Geoff
Earl



Sam
Garofalo



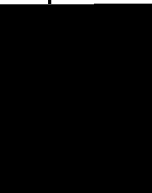
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Christophe
r Duke



Mrs
Maralyn
Jones



Rosemary
Hopkins

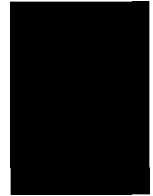


Heather
Harrison





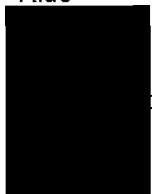
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Alexander



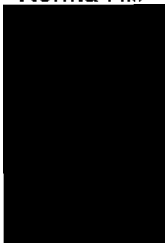
Colin Flynn



Mrs
Patricia
Ride



Norma Hill



Bernard
Hartog



Mrs
Vivienne
Cops

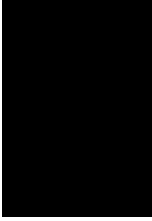


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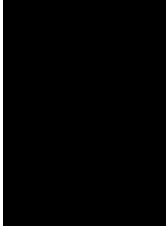




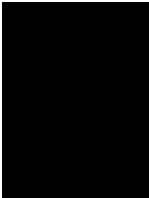
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Lines



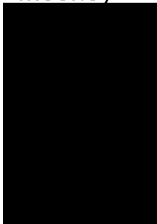
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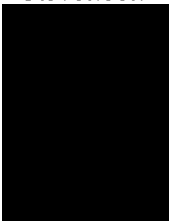
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Neroli
Mooney



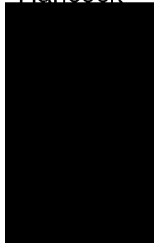
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Rhyll
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Anna
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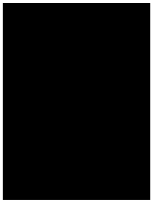
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Parker



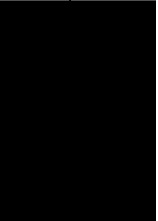
Mr Cedric
Grace



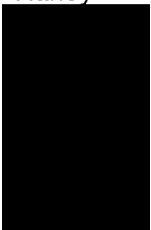
Mrs Linda
Hawker



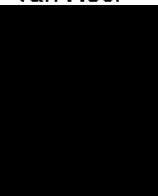
Helen
Cozynsen



Brenda
Harley



Andrew
van Heel



Mrs
Lynette
Mullay





Mr.
Matthew
Hilberts



Marguerite
Ellis



Paula
Vidilini



John
Hopkins



Heather
Jeanne
Robinson

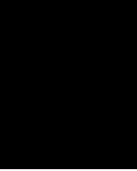


Darryl and
Tracy
Marsh



Arthur and
Daniela
Cherrie





David and
Ruth
Vernon



Jeff and
Lynne
Knight



Richard
and Beth
Seaton



Drago and
Linda
Telisman



Anthony
and Esther
Nott



My concerns regarding the draft Combatting Misinformation Bill

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sat, 19 Aug 2023 21:25:56 +1000

As my submission to the inquiry into the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023, I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding this draft legislation.

Whilst some may believe that the solution to “misinformation” or “disinformation” is more centralised control, I believe that it is far better to let people share their beliefs, respectfully disagree, debate on issues, and make up their own minds about matters.

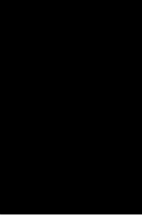
This draft bill, however, will effectively shut down the sharing of many ideas and create so much legal uncertainty for online platforms that they will be forced to censor anything which might be considered controversial.

This would be disastrous because throughout human history, hotly contested or even nearly universally disbelieved ideas have turned out, years later, to be the truth. For example, many scientific discoveries now enshrined as facts – such as the spherical Earth, the circulation of blood through the body, the sun as the centre of the solar system, etc. – were nearly unanimously opposed by almost all the leading scientists of the time. Who is to say that similar things do not occur today?

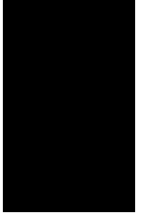
This is why we cannot trust the ability of a mere handful of people to make decisions about what should or should not be classed as misinformation or disinformation – and why this draft bill must either be dumped or at least heavily revised to remedy the major flaws it is built upon.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Miller



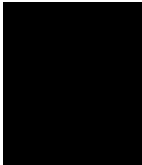
Mrs.
Charmaine
Hickman



Mrs
Lorraine
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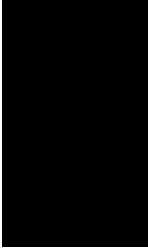


Mrs
Jocelyn
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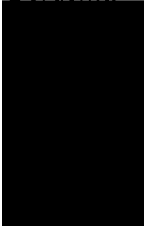




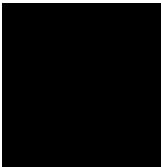
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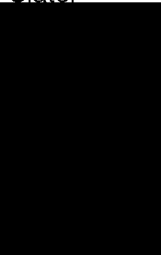
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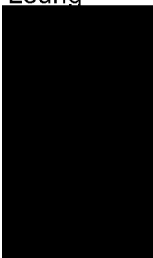
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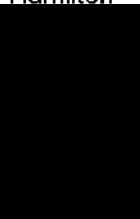
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Ms Patricia
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Dr Tim
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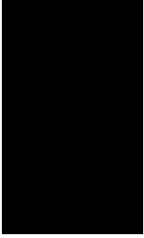


Mr Nevil
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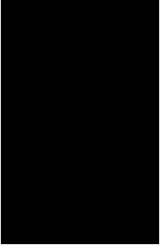




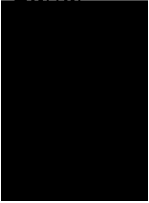
Mrs Pam
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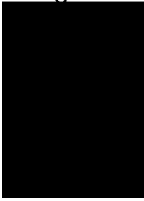
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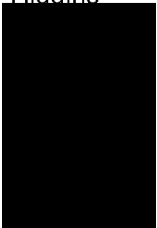
Mrs Irene
Carter



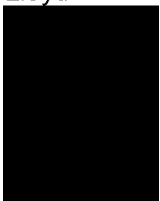
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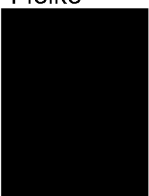
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Higgins



Patricia
Lloyd



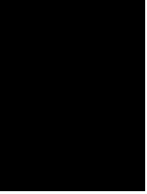
Mrs Janice
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Sandra
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Patricia
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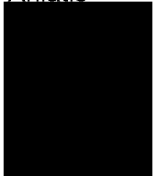
Linda
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Mrs.
Eirene
Angi
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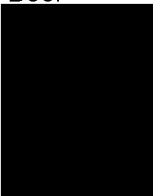
Mrs Renai
Ahlatis



Glenn
Harley

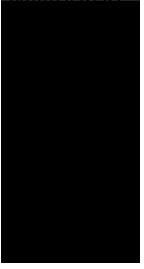


Lawrence
Bool



Mrs

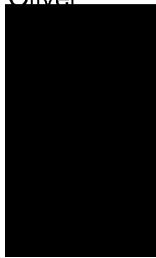
Maryanne
Millington



Mr Alastair
Macdonald



Robin
Oliver



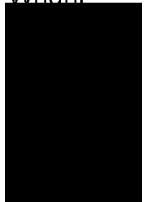
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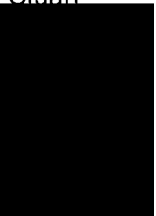
Phyllis Sea



Philip and
Wendy
Wright



Tom and
Paula
Stuart

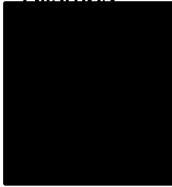


Danny and

Marie
Lacok



Drs Nick
and
Natalie
Blismas



Cliff and
Kaye
Hollins



Frank and
Maureen
Horwill



David and
Ruth
Powick



This bill is lacking in sufficient safeguards against misuse of censorship powers

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sat, 19 Aug 2023 21:35:46 +1000

I wish to make a submission about the draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

This bill tramples on freedom of speech by compelling big tech to silence discussion which – even unintentionally – causes “harm” to such a broad range of targets that almost anything can be construed as such. This bill defines no clear standard, but instead relies upon online platforms to play it as safe-as-possible to remove whatever could be potentially be labelled “mis/disinformation” before they get fined for not doing so.

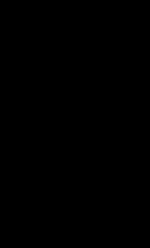
But even a cursory look at history reveals that many ideas which were unpopular, controversial, or even universally condemned later turned out to be true! Humanity has not become infallible since then and people still make mistakes. Just recently, for example, during the pandemic, there are many instances of so-called facts which even governmental departments were later forced to back-track on.

It should be clear that this bill is lacking sufficient clarity and accountability as well as safeguards against the misuse of censorship powers. Moreover, the exclusion of government-authorised content from this censorship regime is hypocritical and inconsistent and will establish one standard for government and another standard for ordinary Australians in terms of what each can say.

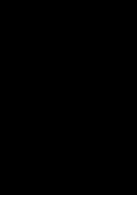
I therefore encourage the Department to instead explore alternative approaches which focus on empowering individuals with critical thinking skills. Education and awareness campaigns – not heavy-handed regulation which infringes upon fundamental freedoms – should be favoured if we wish to preserve any semblance of democracy.

Yours sincerely,

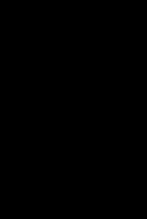
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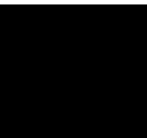
Yee-Ling Lam



Terri Connell



Toni Ollis





Mr Jeremy
Orchard



Vivian
Rudowski



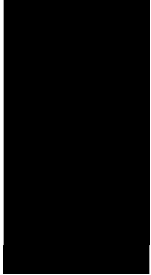
Meryl Lee



Mr Dirk
Jackson



Therese
Sheahan



Mr Stefan
Pittari



Christian
Brett
Morris





Mr. Sami
Greiss



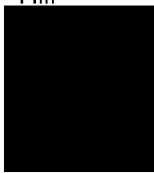
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Mr Dieter
Schoell



Mr
Kenneth
Hill



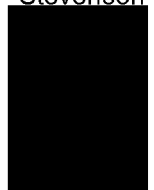
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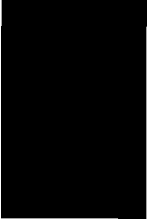


Ms Lenore
Stevenson



Cassandra

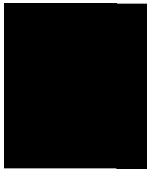
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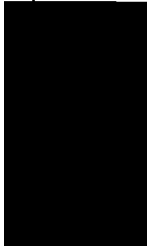
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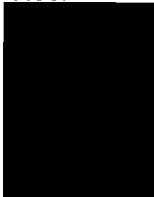
Mrs
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Elizabeth
Epstein



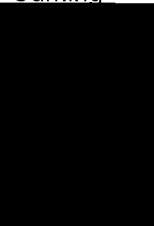
Anne van
Heel




Deborah
Andrews



Mrs Harriet
Cuming



Mrs
Rhonda
Pope




Mrs
Valerie
Tweedie



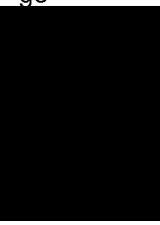
Mrs Miriam
Sorensen



Mr John
Elliott



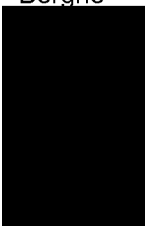
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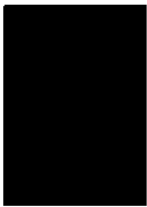
James and
Leanne
Moesker



Hank and
Ruth van
den
Berghe



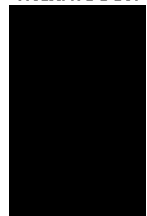
Bret and
Sara Ross



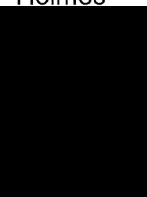
Russell
and
Margaret
Muir



Dr and Mrs
Eamonn
and Nicole
Mathieson



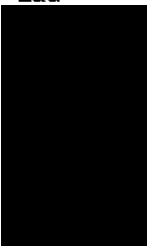
Charmaine
and Steve
Holmes



Ben and
Ariel Drew



Nigel and
Christine
Lau



Coen and
Henny
Boerlage

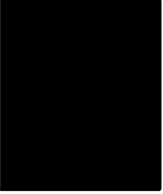




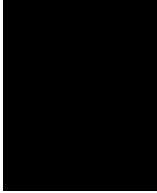
Gary and
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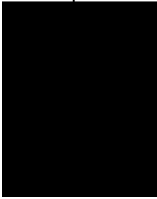
Neil and
Emilie
Owers



Jim and
Debbie
Rogers



Barry and
Anne
Mulquin



Diane and
Rick
Whittle



Free and unrestricted exchange of ideas is essential to a healthy society

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sat, 19 Aug 2023 21:40:35 +1000

Please accept my submission regarding the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023:

Firstly, I believe that there is a great danger in framing legislation which contains politically-loaded, unnecessarily broad, and highly subjective definitions. The definition of harm in the proposed bill, for example, encompasses anything deemed hateful, disruptive, or harmful to a wide range of personal attributes or entities such as gender, sexuality, the environment, people's health, etc. As a Christian, I worry that this legislation could be used particularly to target religious platforms or individuals who hold religious beliefs – as these often contain traditional views regarding marriage, gender, and sexual ethics. Furthermore, restricting speech resulting in "Harm to the Australian environment" could preclude Australians' right to freely question and debate extremely important phenomena and policies which could severely impact all our lifestyles like "global warming", "climate change", and Net Zero policies.

Inexplicably, but very conveniently for the major networks, ACMA's restrictions on misinformation and disinformation will exclude "professional news content" – with another exclusion being "content that is authorised by the Commonwealth; or a State; or a Territory; or a local government." I find that these exclusions are utterly hypocritical.

It is my belief that a healthy, functioning democracy requires freedom of speech, which means that ideas from across the ideological and political spectrum can be discussed and debated by anyone. This is why I respectfully urge you to consider both the alarming scope and potentially very serious implications of this bill – and so accordingly recommend its complete revision.

Yours faithfully,


Kathy
Coulson



Claire
KALTENRI
EDER



Jan
Beauchamp



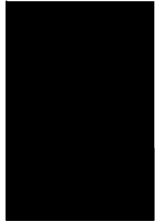
Cheow
Yew



Mrs Lidia
Koniuszko



Mrs
Margaret
Forster



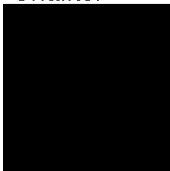
Mrs Mary
Long



Mrs
Rosemarie
Henderson



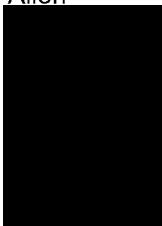
Susan
Chalker



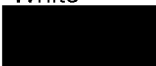
Mrs Lynne
Maddison

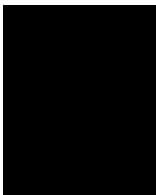


Helen
Allen



Mrs
Michelle
White

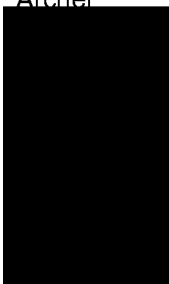




Mrs Anne
O'Dwyer



Shona
Archer



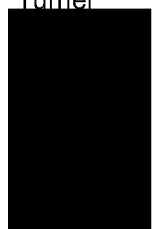
Mrs Judith
Batchelor



Kaye
Harrison



David
Turner



Robyn
Nieass

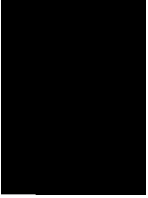


GAEL
HARRISO
N





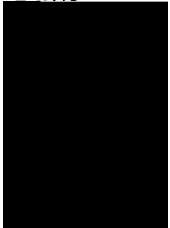
Mrs Karen Mitchell



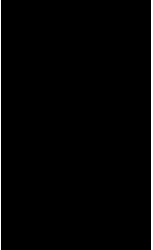
Dave Cory



Mrs Gay Davis



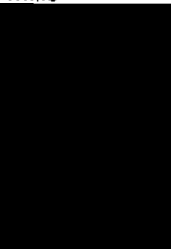
Hugh Varnes



Mrs Joyce Losco

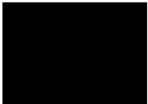


Mr Gordon Mills



Rob Evans





Georgeta
Stanica



Mrs Prue
Duignan



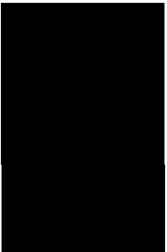
Annette
Hill



Adrian and
Wendy
Elliott



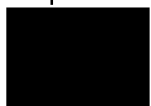
Ralph and
Jennifer
Marsden




Ian and
Dianne
Mullins



Alex and
Sue
Stephens





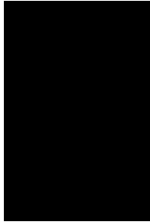
Sean and
Hansi
Muldoon




Alan and
Marie
Alford



Geoffrey
and
Sandra
Oakes



Robert and
Pauline
Burman



David and
Lynette
Tyers

