

To: information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au

Submission RE: The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 (Cth)

I write to submit my opposition to the “Misinformation and Disinformation Bill” currently under consideration by the Australian Federal Government. Australians don’t need a “mis-information or dis-information bill” imposed on them for “their safety”. This is a real and genuine threat against the freedom of speech and democracy. Australians have **always** been allowed to express their views in robust debate on any topic and have survived without any government interference or intervention. It is an insult to the intelligence of every day Australians to suppress this freedom. The Albanese government is not the arbiter of truth and they won’t be protecting people, they will be restricting people’s right to freedom of speech.

The last 2 or 3 years have shown how wrong state and federal governments have been in broadcasting “the truth” about COVID vaccination, that has medically and scientifically proven to be totally ineffective. Rates of infection became widespread and unprecedented regardless of the vax mandates. Why should Australians now trust government to protect them by introducing this unreasonable bill? One that protects the government and mainstream media alone the right to hold what is true and what is not?

The Albanese’s Government has cunningly drafted its legislation to ensure that when online posts are censored or people’s account are banned as a result of the Prime Minister’s laws, there will be no right of appeal to the government, and they’ll be able to blame the social media platforms.

Australians know full well that the internet is full of false information, along with true and helpful information. A good government should trust the public they work for to process and critique what they read and see online accordingly. The best remedy to misinformation is free and open debate, supported by a fair media which doesn’t simply regurgitate the fashionable opinions of the day from social media because it’s cheap and easy journalism.

Albanese says the bill will ensure democracy is preserved. How does silencing people’s views on any matter preserve the democratic process?

Governments arbitrating truth has never worked well in any nation at any time in history; adopting this bill will open the door for a more controlling and autocratic government. Instead of a historically liberal and democratic approach, the Albanese Government is choosing the path of rigid censorship and suppression. Government which appoints itself and fellow elites as the arbiters of truth is the worst possible response – one which authoritarian regimes have chosen since the beginning of recorded history.

Yours sincerely,