

***Submission on the exposure draft of the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment
(Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023***

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I am making this submission in my role as a journalist and writer on Substack

SUMMARY

This proposed legislation sets up the Australian Media and Communications Authority (ACMA) as a powerful censorship organ of the state. The effect will be that ACMA controls everything that Australians can see, hear and say online through industry codes of practice enforced by Big Tech corporations.

This legislation assumes that ACMA, an arm of the state, is able to determine what is “untrue, misleading or deceitful” (misinformation) when they have no such ability. ACMA doesn’t know (and cannot know) what is true. It therefore cannot preside over, set and enforce misinformation codes of practice.

This is outsourced state censorship, totalitarian in scope, designed to control the public conversation and camouflaged as protection.

Misinformation is jargon for being wrong, and disinformation is a made-up word for lying.

The government should not be in the business of determining “truth” for the Australian public.

This legislation should therefore be rejected in full.

Section 1: what is ACMA, what do they do, and why are they pushing for this

Section 2: Dodgy research creates a fictional “misinformation threat” to justify censorship

Section 3: This law is meant to destroy the refuge of dissidents such as Substack, Rumble

Section 4: Terrifying excerpts of the actual proposed legislation

Section 5: In conclusion

1) What is ACMA?

Australia's media regulator ACMA is a federal government bureaucracy of 514 employees¹ formed in 2005 to regulate broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and online content.

It does useful things such as planning the radiofrequency spectrum, collecting licensing fees and fining SMS spammers.² It regulates broadcasters³ ensuring a percentage of Australian-made content is aired on TV and radio, and investigates complaints including about decency.

The problems begin when its remit requires it to regulate media content, both broadcast and online.

ACMA is required to interfere in news and current affairs content, including polemics and talk shows, using industry codes of practice.

This puts ACMA in a difficult position, turning it into a censorship organ and forcing it to become an arbiter of truth in areas where such determinations may not even be possible.

1.1) ACMA tried to censor the internet including Wikileaks

An early warning on using ACMA as a censorship bureau came when the Federal Government tried to "filter" the internet by forcing Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block websites it didn't like.

They sold it as necessary for our safety, to block dangerous crime and child porn.

But during the trial period in 2009, ACMA's government blacklist of banned websites was leaked and published by WikiLeaks.⁴ Several Wikileaks sites were on the banned list. Surprise!

Embarrassed, the Federal Government tried to hide the list and denied Wikileaks was on it (they were). Then they referred the leak to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) for criminal investigation.

¹ "APS Employees by Agency December 2022", Australian Public Service employment database, APSEDii, Australian Public Service Commission, accessed 17 August 2022 at: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/aps.employment.databse/viz/APSEDii-APSEmployeesbyAgencyDecember31/AgencyDetails>

² "DoorDash penalised \$2 million for spam breaches," ACMA website, 16 August 2023. Accessed 17 August 2023 at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/articles/2023-08/doorDash-penalised-2-million-spam-breaches>

³ "Content rules for broadcasters," ACMA website, accessed 17 August 2023 at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/content-rules-broadcasters>

⁴ "Wikileaks spills ACMA blacklist," Liam Tung, ZDNet, 18 March 2009. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at <https://www.zdnet.com/article/wikileaks-spills-acma-blacklist/>

By November 2012, the government backed down. Instead of ACMA censoring the internet with a blacklist, ISPs instead used existing legislation to block Interpol's list of child abuse websites.⁵

Turns out, that's all that was needed.

The lesson was learnt about the danger of government censorship. Until now.

1.2) ACMA again now censors at ISP level

In 2015 a new statutory government office called the eSafety Commissioner was created to stop bullying and abuse online, including incitement to violence and child abuse material.

All the staff except for eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant are employed by ACMA.⁶

In 2021 the Online Safety Act was passed beefing up the powers of the office.⁷

The new laws gave the eSafety Commissioner the power to demand ISPs and social media services reveal the true identities of anonymous users when investigating complaints about cyber-bullying or illegal activity.

The Commissioner also got the power to compel ISPs to block websites at server level. Just like in 2009.

The Commissioner can send a "link deletion notice" or an "app deletion notice" and they must take it down.⁸

The legislation created mandatory industry codes to compel ISPs, social media platforms, search engines, messaging services and app stores to censor illegal and restricted content.

Just like in 2009 it is couched in terms we would all agree on such as banning images of abhorrent acts (eg: rape) or blocking the streaming of violence such as the Christchurch massacre.

Just like in 2009 this is marketing to sell you censorship, because illegal acts are covered by existing legislation.

And here's the problem: this time nobody is going to leak the censorship lists to Wikileaks. Julian Assange is now locked in a UK prison.

1.3) ACMA developing policy with corporate lobby group WEF

⁵ "Aust govt dumps broad mandatory filter for Interpol block," Josh Taylor, ZDNet, 8 November, 2012. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at <https://www.zdnet.com/article/aust-govt-dumps-broad-mandatory-filter-for-interpol-block/>

⁶ "Our structure," eSafety Commissioner website. Accessed 18 August 2021 at: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/our-structure>

⁷ "Online Safety Bill 2021," Parliament of Australia, accessed 18 August 2023 at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_LEGislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6680

⁸ "Learn about the Online Safety Act," eSafety Commissioner website, accessed 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/whats-on/online-safety-act>

The eSafety Commissioner's office can liaise across government departments and "safety stakeholders" both in Australia and internationally to co-ordinate censorship activities.⁹

One of these "stakeholders" is the World Economic Forum (WEF), a lobby group of the world's largest corporations and billionaire oligarchs.¹⁰ The WEF pushes for political power through "stakeholder capitalism".

"Stakeholder capitalism" is a new ideology that wants to supplant old systems like communism or capitalism with a "fourth industrial revolution". Stakeholder capitalism is all about sidelining democracy in favour of technocratic control, disguised as philanthropy.¹¹

It's about selection, not election. They appoint people, you don't get to vote for them. It replaces free speech with selected voices - and they choose those voices. It is anti-democratic. It doesn't want you to control your country. Stakeholder capitalism loves the permanent bureaucracies of government because it can work with them, influence them and capture them.

It is important to understand the ideology that has infiltrated into the push for this law.

It's not about protecting Australia from harm, it's about controlling the public conversation so you are not free.

The WEF appointed Commissioner Grant as one of their "#Agile50, the world's most influential leaders revolutionising government", her profile says,¹² and briefed her on the launch of their digital safety principles in January.¹³

In 2022 at the WEF's annual Davos shindig, Ms Inman Grant said it would be necessary to recalibrate human rights online "from freedom of speech to the freedom to be free from online violence".¹⁴

Notice the conflation of speech (words) with violence (a physical act).

⁹ "An overview of eSafety's role and functions", eSafety Commissioner website, July 2021, Accessed 18 August 2023 at: https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/Overview%20of%20role%20and%20functions_0.pdf

¹⁰ "Our Partners," World Economic Forum website. Accessed 18 August 2023 at <https://www.weforum.org/partners/#search>

¹¹ "Why we need the 'Davos Manifesto' for a better kind of capitalism," World Economic Forum website, 1 December 2019. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/why-we-need-the-davos-manifesto-for-better-kind-of-capitalism/>

¹² "About the Commissioner," eSafety Commissioner website, accessed online 18 August 2023. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/about-the-commissioner#:~:text=Julie%20Inman%20Grant%20is%20Australia%27s,keeping%20its%20citizens%20safer%20online.>

¹³ "Commissioner briefing – WEF Global Principles on Digital Safety launch," eSafety Commissioner website. Accessed 18 August 2023 at: https://web.archive.org/web/20230402070211/https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/LOG_36_Document_10_0.pdf

¹⁴ Video footage of Julie Inman Grant speaking on WEF panel, Davos, 2022. Accessed online at YouTube on 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFdv5-j-rw4>

The eSafety Commissioner's office worked with the WEF's Global Coalition on Digital Safety to produce a report categorising "online harms" in August.¹⁵

It listed some real harms such as doxxing and sextortion.

But then comes "misinformation", a made-up term to complicate being wrong, and "disinformation" which means lying.

This jargon, "misinformation and disinformation", is used to create a problem that seems technical and difficult to understand so that you might need an "expert".

Permanent Canberra bureaucracies and the WEF are feeding a new, fake industry of "misinformation experts" that is propagated by PR firms such as Weber Shandwick¹⁶, which represents Pfizer and Moderna.¹⁷

The "experts" then produce research to justify the censorship that the bureaucracy wants, so that it can act.

They traffic in analysis based on these fake terms so the state can seize powers and crush those who dissent from the agenda.

This is what ACMA did when it commissioned such research to lobby for this legislation (more on this below).

In reality there is no qualification that enables someone to identify misinformation in a way that you are not able to by simply checking provenance and evidence.

ACMA, the WEF and the eSafety Commissioner are trying to create a problem in order to justify censoring the internet.

The joint WEF-eSafety Commissioner report reclassifies misinformation (being wrong) and disinformation (lying) as harms that the government needs to deal with – as if the worst lies hadn't repeatedly come from government itself. Australia's TGA still pretends the covid gene-vaccines prevent you catching and spreading covid after almost every triple-jabbed adult in the land caught the virus.¹⁸

The purpose of the joint WEF-eSafety Commissioner report is to provide "foundational terminology" for "multistakeholder discussions", the report says. That means corporate lobby

¹⁵ "Toolkit for Digital Safety Design Interventions and Innovations: Typology of Online Harms," World Economic Forum, August 2023. Accessed 18 August 2023 at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Typology_of_Online_Harms_2023.pdf

¹⁶ "Weber Shandwick Launches Media Security Center to Address Emerging Information Threats," Weber Shandwick website, 23 September 2021. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://webershandwick.com/news/weber-shandwick-launches-media-security-center-to-address-emerging-information-threats>

¹⁷ "Pharma's PR Firm Will See You Now," Paul D. Thacker, *The DisInformation Chronicle*, Substack, 16 August 2023. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://disinformationchronicle.substack.com/p/pharmas-pr-firm-will-see-you-now>

¹⁸ "TGA boss makes astonishing claim that covid gene-vaccines can prevent transmission," Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, Substack, 13 August 2023. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at: <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/tga-boss-makes-astonishing-claim>

groups get to discuss government censorship with policymakers using the categories in the report.

“These discussions in turn can facilitate the creation of policies and interventions that effectively address online harms,” it goes on to say.

That is the purpose of terms like “misinformation” and “disinformation” being categorised as “harms”. It justifies the state controlling your speech with “interventions”.

Leading journalist Glenn Greenwald has observed that nothing has been more destructive or dangerous in history than the power of the state to suppress and criminalise opinions it dislikes. The entire history of human knowledge is nothing more than the realisation that yesterday’s truths are today’s shameful errors.¹⁹

1.4) Example of ACMA acting as a Ministry of Truth

ACMA has already been using industry codes of practice to interfere in current affairs broadcasting. It is problematic and time-consuming. Sometimes it’s simply not possible to know what the “truth” is in cases of disputed science.

So this legislation outsources the bother of comment and post deletions to the Big Tech platforms. Google, Meta et al will censor your speech according to ACMA’s rules set out in the industry code, but without bothering ACMA with the nitty gritty. With the advent of AI this will be easy: the algorithms can do most of the work.

As an added bonus, ACMA gets to pretend this is some kind of protection of your freedom, since the state will not itself be doing the deleting – as if that makes any difference since they set the rules.

This is not a joke.

The factsheet for this legislation includes “ACMA will not have the power to request specific content or posts be removed from digital platform services” as an example of “strong protections for privacy and freedom of speech”.²⁰

In reality there are no protections at all for your privacy or freedom of speech in this power grab.

Here follows an example of how ACMA has previously been forced to act as an arbiter of “truth” in current affairs programming due to industry codes of practice.

¹⁹ “France’s censorship demands to Twitter are more dangerous than ‘hate speech,’” Glenn Greenwald, *The Guardian*, 3 January 2013. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/02/free-speech-twitter-france>

²⁰ “Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023—Fact sheet,” ACMA website, June 2023. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/communications-legislation-amendment-combatting-misinformation-and-disinformation-bill-2023-factsheet-june2023.pdf>

ACMA suppressed a doctor's warnings about covid gene-vaccines using industry codes of practice

ACMA investigated a religious program that hosted a medical doctor who questioned the covid gene-vaccines in September 2021.²¹

"We're seeing an uptick in the laboratory of reactivated other viruses; Epstein-Barr, herpes viruses, HPV viruses, we're seeing an uptick in certain cancers, already," said the doctor on subscription cable TV show *Ministry Now*.

ACMA investigated this statement and found it to be "not accurate" and a breach of the industry code of practice on accuracy.²²

ACMA didn't know whether it was accurate or not. It couldn't know. It was too soon in 2021 to know if the gene-vaccines cause cancer. Studies take time to design, conduct, get accepted, peer reviewed and published.

How could anyone see whether the mRNA products cause cancers in a year, or even six months, when both the Pfizer and Moderna clinical trials destroyed their control group²³ after just 2.5 months? There was nobody to compare it to.

The best we could do was to have doctors sound the alarm over what they were seeing, which is exactly what the doctor did on *Ministry Now*.

The broadcast licensee didn't provide ACMA with studies to prove the cancer risk, and ACMA couldn't find any. The product had been on the market for less than a year.

Google censored search results in 2021 and 2022 making it difficult to find published studies criticising the gene-vaccines. Google discredited the voices of scientists warning of its terrible side-effects by elevating parody accounts that mocked them or spurious "factchecks" to smear

²¹ "ACMA Investigation report— Ministry Now and Joni Table Talk broadcast on Daystar on Foxtel on 1 and 24 September 2021," p.13, 14. Investigation report no. BI-628, finalised December 2022. ACMA website, accessed 17 August 2023 at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2023-04/report/investigation-report-foxtel-cable-television-pty-ltd-daystar>

²² ACMA Investigation report no. BI-628 cited the "Narrowcaster industry code of practice for accuracy" as follows: "Code No. 1, General Guidelines For Programming, 1.2 Narrowcasters will present accurate and fair news and current affairs programs, and where practicable, will ensure that: (a) factual material will be clearly distinguished from commentary, analysis or simulations; and (b) news or events are not simulated in a way that misleads or alarms the audience."

ACMA had to ask at every point: was the material presented factual in character and if so, was it accurate? If it wasn't accurate that would be a breach. ACMA website accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2023-04/report/investigation-report-foxtel-cable-television-pty-ltd-daystar>

²³ "Long-Term Studies Of COVID-19 Vaccines Hurt By Placebo Recipients Getting Immunized," Richard Harris, NPR, 19 February 2021. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/19/969143015/long-term-studies-of-covid-19-vaccines-hurt-by-placebo-recipients-getting-immuni>
<https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/censorship-code-tricked-australians>

them.²⁴ It even used its cloud drive to block a compilation of gene-vaccine injury stories from being emailed.²⁵

ACMA ruled the doctor's statement false and a breach of the code because it could find no relevant evidence.

It made its decision on what it could find: an AP "fact check"²⁶ (now removed) that "debunked" a *Natural News* story about how mRNA gene-vaccines can cause cancer, claiming it misrepresented a 2018 study. But this had no bearing on whether the doctor's claim was true or not.

Australian health authorities said the gene-vaccines were safe for cancer sufferers to use – but this was irrelevant to the accuracy of the doctor's claim as there were no placebo-controlled studies done on cancer sufferers to prove this.

Now you see the deadly danger of censorship.

ACMA ruled against the narrow-caster of the pay TV program even though it cannot know that what the doctor said was "not accurate".

It has now been shown that the gene-vaccines can indeed activate cancers.

They have also been shown to reactivate latent viruses including herpes.

A peer-reviewed paper by Seneff et al from June 2022²⁷ reviews the medical literature. It explains how the gene-vaccines downregulate critical pathways related to cancer surveillance and infection control in the body leading to an increased risk of certain cancers and the reactivation of viruses, including herpes.

Belgian immunologist Michel Goldman's lymphoma dramatically advanced after his gene-vaccination, as detailed in *The Atlantic*, September 2022.²⁸

²⁴ See how Google misrepresented Canadian vaccinologist Byram Bridle in its search results - when he was right. "Censorship code tricked Australians into reckless medical policy, coerced injections," Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, 16 December 2022. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/censorship-code-tricked-australians>

²⁵ "Google Censors Document Tracking COVID Vaccine Stories," Allum Bokhari, *Breitbart News*, 23 April 2021. Accessed online 18 August 2023 at: <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2021/04/23/google-censors-document-tracking-covid-vaccine-stories/>

²⁶ "Article makes false claims about mRNA vaccines and cancer," Beatrice Dupuy, AP, 12 March 2021, via Wayback Machine, archived 26 May 2023. Original link cited by ACMA: <https://apnews.com/article/fact-checking-afs:Content:9994785135> Archived link accessed 17 August 2023 at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20230526225508/https://apnews.com/article/fact-checking-afs:Content:9994785135>

²⁷ "Innate immune suppression by SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccinations: The role of G-quadruplexes, exosomes, and MicroRNAs," Stephanie Seneff, Greg Nigh, Anthony Kyriakopoulos, Peter McCullough, *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, Volume 164, June 2022. Accessed online 17 August 2023 at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027869152200206X>

²⁸ "Did a famous doctor's covid shot make his cancer worse?" Roxanne Khamsi, *The Atlantic*, 24 September 2022, accessed 17 August 2023 at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2022/09/mrna-covid-vaccine-booster-lymphoma-cancer/671308/>

Numerous case reports of rapid cancer progression following the gene-vaccines have now been published including here²⁹, here³⁰ and here³¹. That last one also warns of the immunomodulatory effects of the gene-vaccine which caused an Epstein-barr virus resurgence.

ACMA cannot know the truth. Accurate science is not done by consensus. Therefore the only safe answer when medical opinions differ is to let doctors be doctors, and air their thoughts without censorship, deplatforming, persecution or demonisation.

ACMA cannot know what is true and therefore cannot set censorship rules. Big Tech platforms cannot arbitrate “truth” any more than ACMA can. An open and free marketplace of ideas is necessary to determine objective reality as well as being necessary for our freedom.

2) Dodgy research creates a fictional “misinformation threat” to justify censorship

The landing page for this proposed legislation states the powers created are consistent with the recommendations in ACMA's June 2021 report to government on the adequacy of digital platforms' disinformation and news quality measures.³²

To bolster this report, ACMA commissioned research from the University of Canberra's News and Media Research Centre and from social media consultancy We Are Social.³³

The University of Canberra research conducted a survey and interviewed focus groups about their opinions and experiences of “misinformation” and “disinformation”.

Where required participants were given the definitions provided by ACMA: ‘Misinformation’ was defined as the inadvertent sharing of false information, while ‘disinformation’ was

²⁹ Sekizawa A, Hashimoto K, Kobayashi S, et al. “Rapid progression of marginal zone B-cell lymphoma after COVID-19 vaccination (BNT162b2): A case report,” *Front Med* (Lausanne). Published 2 August 2022. Accessed online 17 August 2023 at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9377515/>

³⁰ Goldman S, Bron D, Tousseyn T, et al. “Rapid Progression of Angioimmunoblastic T Cell Lymphoma Following BNT162b2 mRNA Vaccine Booster Shot: A Case Report,” *Front Med* (Lausanne). Published 2021 Nov 25. Accessed 17 August 2023 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8656165/>

³¹ Tang WR, Hsu CW, Lee CC, et al. “A Case Report of Posttransplant Lymphoproliferative Disorder After AstraZeneca Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccine in a Heart Transplant Recipient,” *Transplant Proc*. 2022. Published online September 30, 2021. Accessed 17 August 2023 at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34702598/>

³² “New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation,” ACMA website, Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/have-your-say/new-acma-powers-combat-misinformation-and-disinformation>

³³ “A report to government on the adequacy of digital platforms’ disinformation and news quality measures,” ACMA, June 2021. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Adequacy%20of%20digital%20platforms%20disinformation%20and%20news%20quality%20measures.pdf>

defined as the deliberate creation and sharing of information known to be false,” the report states.³⁴

In other words, “misinformation” is simply being wrong online, while “disinformation” is lying.

The real problem then begins: how do you know what is true and what is wrong? How do you know if someone is deliberately lying? Can you read their mind? Perhaps *you* are wrong.

The entire premise of this research is intrinsically subjective.

This is a problem of epistemology. It can't be solved by research such as this.

So the researchers were left with individuals describing things they thought were misinformation. Again, highly subjective.

In the survey methodology for determining whether a person was “Covid-19 informed vs misinformed”, the researchers state:

*“The questions addressing misinformation beliefs are **designed to assess agreement with official advice** on a range of issues related to Covid-19 including mask wearing and appropriate treatment ... **Those who are in general disagreement with the authoritative or factual advice are labelled as ‘misinformed’**. Of the five statements, if a respondent is in disagreement with one or two health advice, they are categorised as ‘misinformed (low) (30%)’. If a respondent disagrees with three to five statements, they are recoded as ‘misinformed (high) (11%)’. The rest was recoded as ‘informed’ (60%)”³⁵ (emphasis mine)*

So there it is.

The assumption is there, underpinning the research, that what the Government says is “true” and if you disagree with that then you are “misinformed”.

ACMA recognised this in its June 2021 report to government, which made the key recommendation that it wanted censorship powers.

On page 9, ACMA wrote:

*“Similarly, those who rely on social media as their main source of news also reported higher levels of exposure to COVID-19 misinformation than the general population This research relies on respondents both knowing and accurately self-reporting on their level of exposure to misinformation. To help address this limitation, the N&MRC also asked surveyed Australians to respond to 5 claims about COVID-19 guidelines, prevention strategies and treatments (for example, ‘wearing a mask does not significantly reduce your risk of infection or spreading the virus’). **Those who agreed with official advice at the time for all 5 statements were***

³⁴Park, S., McCallum, K., Lee, J., Holland, K., McGuinness, K., Fisher, C. & John, E. “Covid-19: Australian News & Misinformation Longitudinal Study,” 2022, Canberra: News & Media Research Centre, p.101 “Understanding Misinformation”. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-03/apo-nid316582.pdf>

³⁵ Ibid, Appendix 1, p.133, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-03/apo-nid316582.pdf>

considered ‘informed’ (59%), while those who disagreed with 1 to 2 statements were considered ‘misinformed (low).’³⁶

The University of Canberra report was bulked up with a quantitative analysis of where people get their news. This provided lots of charts and graphs and percentages to provide the impression of an objective, measurable, factual and scientific report. This camouflages the dodgy and subjective part of the report, and helps ACMA to appear authoritative and informed when making its case for censorship power.

These figures basically showed large numbers of people get their news from social media – which is exactly why the government wants to control social media.

The second report that ACMA relied on to ask for more powers, is the We Are Social network analysis, which ACMA provided to *Letters From Australia* in response to a media request.

This report is called: “Social media insights into how online misinformation and disinformation are being spread across social platforms in Australia”

The assumptions are built right into the headline.

Researchers trawled the internet to find “misinformation” in order to count the mentions of key words, quantify it into objective sounding percentages and authoritative graphs.

They decided on three “key narratives” that were “misinformation” to count: anti-lockdown + Q-anon, anti-vaccine and anti-5G.³⁷

Again, these categories are all incredibly subjective.

What is “anti-vaccine”? People whose whole careers were dedicated to making vaccines, such as Canadian vaccinologist Byram Bridle, were labelled “anti-vaxxers” in 2021 and 2022 because they raised concerns over a rushed new class of product.

“Anti-lockdown” was lumped in with “Q-anon”, as though people must be unhinged to oppose the shut-down of the economy over a relatively mild virus that had a global infection fatality rate of less than 0.03 percent for under-60s, before vaccines, in its more virulent form.³⁸

The assumptions are breathtaking.

This is junk science.

Here is a snip from page 24 to illustrate how “misinformation research” paints opinionated and subjective judgements of other people’s ideas as objectively quantifiable science. Pink text, arrows, underlines are mine.

³⁶ ACMA report, June 2021 <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Adequacy%20of%20digital%20platforms%20disinformation%20and%20news%20quality%20measures.pdf>

³⁷ “Social media insights into how online misinformation and disinformation are being spread across social platforms in Australia”, We Are Social, May 2021. Supplied to *Letters From Australia* as emailed PDF by ACMA.

³⁸ Pezzullo AM, Axfors C, Contopoulos-Ioannidis DG, Apostolatos A, Ioannidis JPA. “Age-stratified infection fatality rate of COVID-19 in the non-elderly population,” *Environ Res*. Published online 28 October 2022. Accessed 19 August 2023 at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9613797/>

Volume of anti-vaccine mentions and interactions of by platform; Includes Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Reddit; April 2020 to March 2021

Looks like scientific research... numbers, tables

| PLATFORM | MENTIONS | LIKES | COMMENTS | SHARES | VIDEO VIEWS | POTENTIAL IMPRESSIONS |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| TWITTER | 16,050 | 7,964 | 15,474 | 32,876 | 0 | 70,840,520 |
| FACEBOOK | 12,435 | 1,379,064 | 500,668 | 515,575 | 3,829,264 | 322,448,902 |
| INSTAGRAM | 2,126 | 883,706 | 71,459 | | 1,196,509 | 48,189,840 |
| REDDIT | 243 | 6,525 | 2,413 | 0 | 0 | 16,011,104 |
| YOUTUBE | 200 | 8,714 | 3,166 | 7,545 | 245,305 | 2,657,339 |
| Grand total | 31,054 | 2,285,973 | 593,180 | 555,796 | 5,271,078 | 460,145,705 |

Fig 21. Analysis includes a sample of 31,054 conversations. Video views do not include YouTube videos posted on Facebook, or videos shared on Twitter or Reddit. Instagram does not include an option to re-share a post. Potential impressions is the aggregate sum of all followers from posts.

→ But is actually just demonisation of government policy opponents

The most engaging pieces of content under the anti-vax narrative focused on the government's plan for mandatory COVID-19 vaccines and the promotion of an 'inadequately tested vaccine'. This included a meme post suggesting that readers should not put faith in a vaccine but in God, and a video falsely alleging that 80% of people who tried a COVID-19 vaccine experienced systemic side effects. *guilt by association fallacy here*

Notice how "anti-vax narrative" is here defined as being against the government's coerced injections of gene-vaccines.

Notice how this misrepresents these people as being against all vaccines, which demonises their position by exaggeration.

These products were bought by the government before testing was finished.³⁹ They were developed in less than a year despite being an entirely new class of drug with a novel mechanism of action, even though the safety and manufacturing testing for traditional vaccines ordinarily takes 10 to 15 years.

Notice the "guilt by association" fallacy which smears those with fact-based concerns about the inadequate testing of the gene-vaccines with people who allegedly said put your faith in God instead of a vaccine.

This report confuses opinion with "misinformation", such as the meme below (pink text is mine).

³⁹ Australian Covid-19 Vaccination Policy, Australian Government, Department of Health, 13 November 2020. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/12/covid-19-vaccination-australian-covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf>

Example highlights how misinformation is being spread via like-minded community members and alternative news.



The fact that this entire report is pseudoscience is not the fault of the researchers.

The entire class of “misinformation and disinformation” research is junk for the exact same reason. The premise is wrong.

When given the remit by ACMA to go and quantify “misinformation” on the internet, the researchers did their best.

But they cannot help but produce exactly what you see, because it’s not possible to determine what is true and what is not. It’s a loaded judgement and always will be.

The government told Australians that an entirely new class of drug, a gene-vaccine that was only ever provisionally registered by the TGA and rushed to market with barely any testing, was safe and effective. It didn’t work and it’s so unsafe that thousands of Australians have injuries and an unknown number have died.⁴⁰

ACMA now wants to censor “misinformation” and their own research clearly shows that they consider disagreeing with whatever the official government advice is at the time to be “misinformation”.

Other than that, ACMA cannot actually define “misinformation”, as they admit in their June 2021 report to government it is “constantly shifting” and there are “difficulties in assessing falsehoods”.

Misinformation by platform

ACMA 2021 “Report to Government on the Adequacy of Digital Platforms’ Disinformation and News Quality Measures” p.17

Given the constantly shifting nature of misinformation, difficulties in assessing falsehoods, and the challenges in accessing relevant data, it is not possible to quantify the true scale and volume of misinformation in Australia. However, consumer surveys and open-source network analysis can help provide insights into which platforms are at higher risk and help provide a baseline for future assessments.

⁴⁰ “AUSTRALIA SUES: Dr Melissa McCann launches class action for thousands of covid vaccine injured and bereaved against the government,” Alison Bevege, Letters From Australia, Substack, 26 April 2023. Accessed online 19 August 2023 at https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/australia-sues-dr-melissa-mccann?utm_source=profile&utm_medium=reader2

This is incredibly dangerous. This is about silencing dissent – including from our own democratically elected representatives in Parliament.

ACMA’s June 2021 report to government slandered Craig Kelly, at that time a sitting Member of Parliament, as a misinformation superspreader for his brave advocacy for gene-vaccine injured people. He lost his preselection and was kicked out of the Liberal Party.

It stated:

*“In our commissioned research, We Are Social compiled a list of the top 20 Australian influencers sharing misinformation narratives, based on their total number of interactions. Heading this list was celebrity chef Pete Evans, followed by Federal MP Craig Kelly, and prominent anti-vaccine campaigner Taylor Winterstein.”*⁴¹

3) This law will destroy the refuge of dissidents

The fact sheets published along with ACMA’s June 2021 report reveal the true intent of this legislation.

It’s to destroy the last places online where dissidents could be heard.

During the pandemic, dissident doctors and scientists were censored, deplatformed and persecuted by the state across the Anglosphere.

At the direct request of Australia’s Department of Home Affairs⁴² and Department of Health⁴³, both Twitter and Facebook took down posts from gene-vaccine injured people looking for help because they got in the way of the “safe and effective” gene-vaccine messaging campaign already planned in November 2020.⁴⁴

People on Facebook still cannot share Senator Gerard Rennick’s post of the true story of Tasmanian teenager Faith Ranson, because Facebook has defined it as “against community

⁴¹ ACMA report, June 2021, p.23 <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Adequacy%20of%20digital%20platforms%20disinformation%20and%20news%20quality%20measures.pdf>

⁴² Senator Alex Antic, Twitter, 24 May 2023. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: https://twitter.com/SenatorAntic/status/1661253185934344193?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Cwterm%5E1661253185934344193%7Ctwgr%5E0b7548454dae4e231b52c84cadaa7519436e0f9%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.michaelsmithnews.com%2F2023%2F05%2Fguardian-of-freedom-alex-antic-on-governmentbureaucracys-social-media-censorship.html

⁴³ Department of Health and Aged Care Freedom of Information Disclosure Log entry 3953-2023, email from Department of Health to Facebook asking them to take down a jab-injured support page on 26 August 2021. FOI release date 27 February 2023. <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/foi-disclosure-log/foi-3953-documents-related-to-covid-19-social-media-spend-and-correspondence>

⁴⁴ Australian Covid-19 Vaccination Policy, Australian Government, Department of Health, 13 November 2020. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/12/covid-19-vaccination-australian-covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf>

standards on misinformation that could cause physical harm” because it accurately states that the Pfizer gene-vaccine injured her.⁴⁵

Twitter (pre-Elon Musk) turned down the visibility on Stanford University professor of medicine Jay Bhattacharya in 2020 and 2021 so his messages would never catch on and trend – so you wouldn’t read them.⁴⁶

That’s because he co-authored the 2020 Great Barrington Declaration with Harvard University professor of medicine Martin Kulldorff and Oxford University epidemiologist Sunetra Gupta to warn the world that the the best covid strategy was not lockdowns at all but to protect the elderly (who had a thousand-fold higher death risk) while allowing the young to develop herd immunity from natural infection.

Not even the medical professors and elected representatives could share true information that challenged the enforced state covid propaganda on Twitter, Google and Facebook - and not just in Australia but in New Zealand, the US, the UK and Canada.

YouTube (owned by Google) would take down the true stories of gene-vaccine injured people almost immediately.⁴⁷

Corporate media houses refused to print the stories that went against government covid policy. They ignored the voices of gene-vaccine injured people and when they mentioned them, they were demonised as “cookers” and “anti-vaxxers”, or their injuries were represented without evidence as being “extremely rare”.

So dissidents found refuge in smaller sites.

Substack became a home for real journalism. Rumble and Bitchute were the free speech alternatives to YouTube. Scientists and doctors and gene-vaccine injured people could talk about what was happening there.

But ACMA does not want these corners of respite to exist at all.

The purpose of this new law is to crush the dissidents on these places, too, so there is nowhere for them to share their stories on the internet at all.

This can be seen in Fact Sheet 3 that accompanied ACMA’s June 2021 report to government requesting new powers.

⁴⁵“Informed people all agree with the government”: dodgy research props up censorship grab,” Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, 7 August 2023. Accessed online 19 August 2023 at: <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/informed-people-all-agree-with-the>

⁴⁶ “Censorship code tricked Australians into reckless medical policy, coerced injections,” Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, Substack, 16 December 2022. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/p/censorship-code-tricked-australians>

⁴⁷ “Severe muscle wasting, nerve damage: Manly mother-of-two, once a surfer, tells how the covid vaccines put her in a wheelchair,” Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, Substack, 23 March 2023. Accessed online 19 August 2023 at <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/publish/posts/detail/110098694?referrer=%2Fpublish%2Fposts>

Under the heading “Scoping new regulatory powers for the ACMA”, the fact sheet complained that “conspiratorial communities” could seek out alternative platforms to avoid moderation (censorship) and that because their codes of practise were voluntary platforms could ignore them.

They want the power to force all platforms to censor for them.

They wrote:

“The ACMA recommended that government should provide it with reserve powers to register industry codes, enforce industry code compliance and make standards relating to the activities of digital platforms. These powers would provide a mechanism for further intervention if code administration arrangements prove inadequate, or the voluntary industry code fails. The government has accepted this recommendation.”⁴⁸

They even created a “Misinformation and Disinformation Action Group” to expedite their censorship drive.

Thanks to Elon Musk’s purchase of Twitter and the excellent journalism of Matt Taibbi and a team of investigative reporters at Racket News, the public learnt that the mass censorship of social media over the last three years was at the direct request of the US security state, its five-eyes allies (including Australia) and a linked network of more than 50 agencies, foundations and university-linked think tanks that draw funding to promote the censorship-industrial complex.⁴⁹

This censorship was so shocking to the American people, who have a constitutionally-protected right to free speech, that a court case was launched which resulted in an extraordinary ruling on July 4 temporarily banning the FBI and Biden Administration officials from even contacting social media firms for the purpose of censorship that would infringe on the First Amendment free speech rights of Americans.⁵⁰

Australia has no free speech protections in law at all other than a weak implied right to political communication in the constitution.

But if this legislation goes through, the Big Tech platforms may apply these “misinformation” censorship codes internationally, across their operations, including in the US and Canada and New Zealand - giving the US security state everything it wanted and pressured them for and

⁴⁸ “ACMA misinformation report Fact sheet 3: next steps,” ACMA website, 2022. Accessed online 19 August 2023 at https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/ACMA%20misinformation%20report_Fact%20sheet%203%20-%20next%20steps_0.pdf

⁴⁹ “Report on the Censorship-Industrial Complex: The Top 50 Organizations to Know,” Susan Schmidt, Andrew Lowenthal, Tom Wyatt, Matt Taibbi et al, *Racket News*, Substack, 11 May 2023. Accessed 19 August 2023 at: <https://www.racket.news/p/report-on-the-censorship-industrial-74b>

⁵⁰ “Judge bans US Government from social media contact for violating free speech rights - the exact same thing Australia is trying to put into law right now,” Alison Bevege, *Letters From Australia*, Substack, 5 July 2023, Accessed online 19 August 2023 at <https://lettersfromaustralia.substack.com/publish/posts/detail/133147873?referrer=%2Fpublish%2Fposts>

more, bypassing the First Amendment because Big Tech can say “we chose to have these industry codes”.

4) Selected sections of terrifying legislation:

4.1) The legislation vaguely defines “harms” from “misinformation” so that everything is illegal

Sweeping definitions so anyone they don't like can be targeted for anything

- 7 *harm* means any of the following:
- 8 (a) hatred against a group in Australian society on the basis of
- 9 ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, age,
- 10 religion or physical or mental disability;
- 11 (b) disruption of **public order or society** in Australia;
- 12 (c) harm to the integrity of Australian democratic processes or of
- 13 Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government
- 14 institutions;
- 15 (d) harm to the **health** of Australians;
- 16 (e) harm to the Australian environment;
- 17 (f) economic or financial harm to Australians, the **Australian**
- 18 **economy or a sector of the Australian economy.**

4.2) Restrict political speech under the legislation as long as it's "not excessive, having regard to any circumstances the ACMA considers relevant"

13 **Division 4—Misinformation codes**

14 **Subdivision A—Registration of misinformation codes**

15 **37 Registration of codes**

- 16 (1) This clause applies if:
- 17 (a) the ACMA is satisfied that a body or association represents a
- 18 particular section of the digital platform industry; and
- 19 (b) that body or association develops a code that applies to
- 20 participants in that section of the digital platform industry
- 21 and deals with one or more matters relating to the operation
- 22 of digital platform services by those participants; and
- 23 (c) the body or association gives a copy of the code to the
- 24 ACMA; and
- 25 (d) the ACMA considers:
- 26 (i) whether the code burdens freedom of political
- 27 communication; and
- 28 (ii) if so, whether the burden is reasonable and not
- 29 excessive, having regard to any circumstances the
- 30 ACMA considers relevant; and
- 31 (e) the ACMA is satisfied that:
- 32 (i) the code (or part of the code) requires participants in
- 33 that section of the digital platform industry to
-

4.3) Government, academia and “professional news content” (compliant media) is exempt

11 *excluded content for misinformation purposes* means any of the
12 following:

- 13 (a) content produced in good faith for the purposes of
14 entertainment, parody or satire;
- 15 (b) professional news content;
- 16 (c) content produced by or for an educational institution
17 accredited by any of the following:
18 (i) the Commonwealth;
19 (ii) a State;
20 (iii) a Territory;
21 (iv) a body recognised by the Commonwealth, a State or a
22 Territory as an accreditor of educational institutions;
- 23 (d) content produced by or for an educational institution
24 accredited:
25 (i) by a foreign government or a body recognised by a
26 foreign government as an accreditor of educational
27 institutions; and
28 (ii) to substantially equivalent standards as a comparable
29 Australian educational institution;
- 30 (e) content that is authorised by:
31 (i) the Commonwealth; or
32 (ii) a State; or

Who defines
this?

Backdoor so
Canberra can
lie to you
without
consequences

It's not
"misinformation"
when WE say it
even when wrong

4.4) Demonetisation to starve out alternate independent media will be enshrined in law

33 Examples of matters that may be dealt with by misinformation codes and misinformation standards

- (1) This clause sets out examples of matters that may be dealt with by misinformation codes and misinformation standards.
- (2) The applicability of a particular example will depend on which section of the digital platform industry is involved.
- (3) The examples are as follows:
 - (a) preventing or responding to misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services;
 - (b) using technology to prevent or respond to misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services;
 - (c) preventing or responding to misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services that constitutes an act of foreign interference (within the meaning of the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979*);
 - (d) preventing advertising involving misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services;
 - (e) preventing monetisation of misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services;
 - (f) supporting fact checking;
 - (g) allowing end-users to detect and report misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services;
 - (h) giving information to end-users about the source of political or issues-based advertisements;
 - (i) policies and procedures for receiving and handling reports and complaints from end-users;
 - (j) giving end-users and others information about misinformation or disinformation on digital platform services.

4.5) ACMA can set any misinformation standards or vary them, by “legislative instrument”, a fancy way of saying “making your own rules without interference from the elected Parliament”

14 **51 Variation of misinformation standards**

- 15 (1) The ACMA may, by **legislative instrument**, vary a misinformation
16 standard that applies to participants in a particular section of the
17 digital platform industry if it is satisfied that it is necessary or
18 convenient to do so to provide adequate protection for the
19 community from misinformation or disinformation on digital
20 platform services of those participants.
- 21 (2) Before varying the standard, the ACMA must consider:
- 22 (a) whether the standard (as varied) would burden freedom of
23 political communication; and
- 24 (b) if so, whether the burden would be reasonable and not
25 excessive, having regard to any circumstances the ACMA
26 considers relevant.

4.6) ACMA can tinker with the rules

7 **64 Digital platform rules**

- 8 (1) The ACMA may, by legislative instrument, make rules (the *digital*
9 *platform rules*) prescribing matters:
- 10 (a) required or permitted by this Act to be prescribed by the
11 digital platform rules; or
- 12 (b) necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or
13 giving effect to this Schedule.
- 14 (2) To avoid doubt, the digital platform rules may not do the
15 following:
- 16 (a) create an offence or civil penalty;
- 17 (b) provide powers of:
- 18 (i) arrest or detention; or
- 19 (ii) entry, search or seizure;
- 20 (c) impose a tax;
- 21 (d) set an amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated
22 Revenue Fund under an appropriation in this Act;
- 23 (e) directly amend the text of this Act.

4.7) ACMA is the final arbiter of what the “misinformation standards” will be, so they really will be the Ministry of Truth behind the censorship

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- 1 (2) The ACMA may, by legislative instrument, determine a standard
2 that applies to participants in that section of the digital platform
3 industry and deals with that matter or those matters. A standard
4 under this subclause is to be known as a ***misinformation standard***.
- 5 (3) Before determining a standard under this clause, the ACMA must
6 consult the body or association to whom the request mentioned in
7 paragraph (1)(a) was made.

And again here

- 12 **46 ACMA may determine standards—request for a code is not**
13 **complied with**
- 14 (1) This clause applies if:
- 15 (a) the ACMA has made a request under subclause 38(1) in
16 relation to the development of a code that is to:
- 17 (i) apply to participants in a particular section of the digital
18 platform industry; and
- 19 (ii) deal with one or more matters relating to the operation
20 of digital platform services by those participants; and
- 21 (b) any of the following conditions is satisfied:
- 22 (i) the request is not complied with;
- 23 (ii) if indicative targets for achieving progress in the
24 development of the code were specified in the notice of
25 request—any of those indicative targets were not met;
- 26 (iii) the request is complied with, but the ACMA
27 subsequently refuses to register the code; and
- 28 (c) the ACMA is satisfied that it is necessary or convenient for
29 the ACMA to determine a standard in relation to that matter
30 or those matters in order to provide adequate protection for
31 the community from misinformation or disinformation on the
32 services.

4.8) The penalties will be civil penalties, ie: fines described in terms of commonwealth penalty units. A penalty unit right now is \$275

- 1 (5E) The pecuniary penalty payable by a person in respect of:
 - 2 (a) a contravention of subclause 15(1) or 16(3) of Schedule 9; or
 - 3 (b) a contravention of section 205E that relates to a
 - 4 contravention of subclause 15(1) or 16(3) of Schedule 9;
 - 5 must not exceed:
 - 6 (c) if the person is a body corporate—5,000 penalty units; or
 - 7 (d) if the person is not a body corporate—1,000 penalty units.

- 8 (5F) The pecuniary penalty payable by a person in respect of:
 - 9 (a) a contravention of subclause 18(5) or 19(5) of Schedule 9; or
 - 10 (b) a contravention of section 205E that relates to a
 - 11 contravention of subclause 18(5) or 19(5) of Schedule 9;
 - 12 must not exceed:
 - 13 (c) if the person is a body corporate—40 penalty units; or
 - 14 (d) if the person is not a body corporate—30 penalty units.

- 15 (5G) The pecuniary penalty payable by a person in respect of:
 - 16 (a) a contravention of subclause 43(1) or 44(3) of Schedule 9; or
 - 17 (b) a contravention of section 205E that relates to a
 - 18 contravention of subclause 43(1) or 44(3) of Schedule 9;
 - 19 must not exceed:
 - 20 (c) if the person is a body corporate—the greater of:
 - 21 (i) 10,000 penalty units; and
 - 22 (ii) 2% of the annual turnover of the body corporate during
 - 23 the period (the *turnover period*) of 12 months ending at
 - 24 the end of the month in which the conduct constituting
 - 25 the contravention occurred; or

5) IN CONCLUSION:

- “Misinformation and disinformation” is a fake problem, small in scope. Wrong information on the internet is not a big threat to Australians
- A sinister danger is instead posed by state control of information and government policies that cannot be challenged by loud and uncontrolled dissent
- Our safety and wellbeing is guaranteed only by a robust marketplace of ideas where people are able to be heard, even when they are wrong
- A parasitic industry of fake “misinformation and disinformation” experts has been created to justify censorship. There is no qualification that enables “experts” to identify wrong information in a way that we are not able to
- This legislation assumes that ACMA, an arm of the state, is able to determine what is “untrue, misleading or deceitful” (misinformation) when they have no such ability. ACMA doesn’t know what is true. It therefore cannot preside over misinformation codes of practise
- Several examples of “dangerous misinformation” that ACMA used to lobby for these powers turned out later to be factually accurate, or just different opinions that challenged government messaging
- This legislation is a power grab by an unelected bureaucracy that would get to decide what “misinformation” is for all of us and ban it, strangling our democracy
- Under this legislation ACMA would set the censorship rules, called “misinformation industry codes” but outsource the implementation to Big Tech corporations. This allows the state to hide behind corporate partners in order to pretend that they are not censoring. The technical definition of corporate-state combines is “fascism”
- ACMA are the ones with the final say on the “misinformation and disinformation codes of practice” under this legislation, which they would have the power to enforce
- Unelected bureaucrats including former police officers and security state operatives at ACMA would determine “truth” for the whole country: what can be seen, heard or written about online. Whatever they don’t like would be censored as “misinformation”.

- This law compels Big Tech platforms to collect and report extensive data on purported “misinformation” back to ACMA. This inflates ACMA’s importance so they can traffic in analysis and ask for even more money, power, people and research to “solve” the fake problem that they themselves created
- ACMA, an unelected bureau, would have the power to create legislative instruments, making its own rules and sidelining our elected legislators
- This legislation will crush dissident voices from alternative media where they found refuge during the covid pandemic. This is deliberate.
- This legislation exempts “professional news” which is not defined, but includes the compliant corporate media houses that heavily censored content during the pandemic. It is not possible for media to be free and adversarial if it has to partner with and be recognised by the state in order to publish. This is the manner in which North Korea permits KCNA to publish as “professional news”. Freedom is guaranteed by diverse and chaotic voices that the government can’t control by registration, industry standards or the centralised ownership of a few big players
- This legislation will back-engineer censorship to the (already compliant) corporate media outlets such as Daily Mail, Nine Newspapers or News.com.au which need social media shares and Google search visibility for audience and revenue sharing. Journalists who might otherwise refuse overt state censorship will be manipulated by incentives to comply with “industry standards”
- Australia already has laws to deal with criminal behaviour such as incitement to violence, fraud and child porn. Criminal acts are a matter for the police using the extensive powers they already have. New censorship rules are not needed
- This legislation carries no protection for free speech at all, despite the Department dishonestly claiming to do so by not giving ACMA the power to request specific posts be removed. ACMA doesn’t want or need to micromanage because the platforms are forced to do it for them.
- ACMA and the Federal Government should have exactly zero say in censoring the voices of Australians even when they are wrong or misinformed

This legislation cannot be allowed to pass in any form.