

## Feedback on an exposure draft of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I have grave concerns at the potential for overreach and for silencing of free speech by Australians should this Communications Legislation Amendment bill be passed. I do not think a government body is able to be free enough from corporate or political influence for this to be anything other than a step towards totalitarian control of who can speak against the mainstream views of the day.

Having just lived through a time when holding and expressing dissenting views on the safety and efficacy of using a gene modifying medication resulted in the loss of citizen rights, I am keenly aware of what can ensue when a citizen does not agree with current governmental policy. And now that it is obvious that there was no danger in asking these questions openly, I am loathe to trust the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), with new powers to combat future online misinformation and disinformation. Clearly, certain topics have proven now to have been deemed misinformation when they were not so. If we can't openly discuss alternative views and concerns on social media platforms without penalty, how can valid issues be raised on future community issues? The freedom of expression to debate topics respectfully is a principle of democracy. The size of penalty for individuals is exorbitant and threatening. How are we to engage openly in international discussions and exchanges when we are controlled and people from other countries can't express views without potential penalty that may also be contrary to what our current bureaucracy wants people to believe?

I do not support this Bill in its current form or any amendment that limits free speech. We have enough laws controlling violence, fraud and coercion. We don't need the government telling us what we are allowed to talk about.

I am happy for my views to be openly published.

Andrea Rowe.

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