

Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023 Will Be Disastrous

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sun, 20 Aug 2023 17:24:42 +1000
Attachments: Unnamed Attachment (68 bytes)

Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

The proposed 'Misinformation Bill' is wrongheaded and dangerous.

Thank you so much for reading my submission for the inquiry into the Misinformation Bill 2023. With all due respect, I can see no place for this bill in a democracy, there should never be any need to silence one side of a debate.

I believe that government should respect the intelligence of all Australians and never feel the need to tell them what to think. The best antidote to error, is more research and better arguments, not silencing those we disagree with.

I think the terms Misinformation and Disinformation are terms that should never have come into our language.

Social media companies such as Meta and Twitter have voiced their concerns over the proposed law because it's easy to see how the power given to the ACMA could be abused. Meta said that the law would have a "chilling" effect on free speech. It would be easy for a government to label as "misinformation" anything that could hurt its reputation (as many authoritarian governments already do). Giving the government such unrestricted power is terrifying.

Sorting fact from fiction is not always easy. What someone thinks is true might be what someone else thinks is false. We need debate and the free flow of information to consider ideas and arrive at the truth. Censoring debate stops this vital process.

It's easy to see how governments could abuse these proposed powers to censor truthful content they found inconvenient. The proposed law can and will do incredible damage if it's allowed to be passed.

Please reject this proposed law.

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