

Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023 Must Be Rejected

From: [REDACTED]
To: Information Integrity <information.integrity@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date: Sun, 20 Aug 2023 19:09:08 +1000
Attachments: Unnamed Attachment (68 bytes)

Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am pleased to take this opportunity to make a submission on the proposed "misinformation and disinformation" bill.

In short, I completely reject the bill and ask you to do the same.

Firstly, the bill is unnecessary. In one of the examples given, there is the situation of incitement to hate crimes. But incitement to commit a hate crime is already subject to criminal law. We have a specific section of the law that deals with incitement. Criminal activity is criminal activity, whether it's done on a digital platform or elsewhere. The law should cover criminal activity regardless of where it is committed. We don't need a new code for digital platforms for which Australian law exists and law enforcement is already responsible. The other examples also should fall under a specific criminal code.

We elect our representatives to pass carefully-defined legislation. We don't need help from Facebook staff.

Secondly, despite all claims to the contrary, the proposed bill will harm free speech. Therefore, it is in breach of human rights. To use two examples. One, the 'lab leak' hypothesis from the origins of Covid-19 was once branded a conspiracy theory and social media censored it. But now it's the leading explanation. Legitimate free speech was shut down. Two, the idea that Covid vaccines didn't prevent transmission was also branded false with the potential to do harm: it would lead to vaccine hesitancy. The problem is, everyone knows the vaccines don't prevent transmission. Nearly everyone has been vaccinated; nearly everyone has had Covid. Once again, legitimate free speech was censored.

These two quick examples are without a 'misinformation' bill. If the bill passes into law, it will make censorship of legitimate free speech, and therefore breaches of human rights far worse, ingrained, and government-endorsed. It will be a sorry state of government that endorses violations of human rights.

As a very concerned citizen, I plead with you to put this terrible proposal in the dustbin of history where it belongs.

[REDACTED]