

Misinformation Bill Will Be Disastrous

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Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

The "Misinformation Bill" must be rejected.

My friends and I believe in freedom of speech, but this proposed bill is leading us from a democracy to a dictatorship, where people can only say and even think what the government deems is true. We do not expect democratically elected leaders to say what they like and tell us we can't. Lawyer Justin Quill says the proposed law is "the biggest imposition on free speech that I've ever seen in a piece of legislation."

Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), state respectively:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." and

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

The Commonwealth of Australia must fulfil its role to protect the freedoms of every Australian citizen, including those noted above. Freedom of speech is the bedrock of a free and fair society. It is a fundamental value of Australia. Despite denials to the contrary, the proposed bill will erode this fundamental human right.

Freedom of speech is essential in attempting to discover truth. The whole process of discovery relies on free-flowing information that can be tested and questioned. There are many instances when society or the government of the day has held to a position or scientific idea, only to have it thrown out years later. The proposed bill will effectively halt this essential dialogue.

The internet has become the 'town square' where the latest ideas can be debated. Now people can send factual information around the world in an instant, as well as spread false ideas. There are positives and negatives to modern technology. But setting up the government as the arbiter of truth is not the answer.

The proposed bill would do incredible damage and must be thrown out.

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