

New ACMA powers to combat misinformation & disinformation

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To whom it may concern

Thank you for giving the opportunity to give feedback to the proposed law.

I believe that censorship under the terms of disinformation and misinformation is open to a very broad interpretation, and makes this bill potentially more dangerous than any perceived problem it seeks to address.

Whilst understanding some of the problems that exist with social media, I feel that everyone has the right to their individual opinion. I am an older Australian who remembers when there was no TV, and I personally do not subscribe to Facebook Twitter etc

however I realise there are good and bad influences with all media. This does not mean that the general public needs to be spoon fed, and I believe that critical thinking should be promoted in a positive and respectful way.

Who then is the arbiter of truth? Who decides in their wisdom what is the truth? What checks and balances are there too ensure that the supposed truth is actually the truth? An individual's truth is relative to their personal experience and does not make them a dishonest person in telling their story, just as science is related to personal findings in studies. These studies very often give different results which is not bad, and can indeed open the debate to further review. This I believe is healthy for our society.

Things in the past have been thought to be true and later proved not to be, this is life, how can we have a healthy debate with such a law that controls the media by the government?

Whilst I agree that there are certain unsavoury items that have need to be monitored and removed, i.e. content encouraging such things as child sexual abuse and extremist violence, I feel like this bill is very vague in what is actually going to be censored, and may lead to a potential loss of free speech and sharing of ideas critical to our democracy. Indeed, free speech is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy.

The universal declaration of Human Rights 1948, article 19 states:-

“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.

This agreement was created at the time for a purpose, and I believe we should abide by this agreement to protect our human rights as an Australian family.

Thank you in advance for considering my submission on this matter.

I remain, yours faithfully

Susie Young