

I provide a copy below of a submission made to my local member, [REDACTED].

Please take this as my submission on the proposed Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill:

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> I am horrified at the prospect of this bill being introduced. It's positively Orwellian and a major assault on free speech.

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> I never thought in a formerly free and easy-going country like Australia that I would see a government of ours attempt to censor its own citizens on general issues of discussion.

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> The proposed bill as I understand it is far too broad. It is of course appropriate to control material which would directly incite people to violence or hatred against a particular group.

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> But to attempt to control "misinformation" about "harm to public health" or "harm to the environment" is an outrageously authoritarian curtailment of open discussion and free speech.

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> Who is to be the arbiter or what constitutes "misinformation"? Any society benefits from free and open discussion of debatable issues, even contentious ones, or in fact - particularly contentious ones. Indeed there can never be any progress if new ideas which are not initially embraced by the general population are unable to be put forward.

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> There have been numerous examples in the last few years of issues which were initially dismissed as misinformation, which later turned out to be true. Covid originating from the Wuhan lab is a case in point of an issue originally dismissed as a conspiracy, which is now broadly accepted as being the most likely origin. Another issue is that the original claim by health authorities that the Covid vaccine stopped transmission between people, which the drug companies have now admitted was never able to be substantiated. The vaccine may be great for helping individuals to become less sick if infected, but it's now known there is no evidence that it stops transmission.

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> The harm of this highly intrusive legislation will inevitably be much greater than any harm it seeks to prevent. As citizens of a supposedly free country we must be able to freely debate issues without government censorship, and without the threat of huge fines and even prison terms. Again I'm amazed to see an Australian government putting such a bill forward. I urge that it be radically scaled down and be limited only to ensuring that violent content, or incitement to violence is targeted.

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Yours Sincerely,

June Noble
[REDACTED]