Please consider my email below as a submission. The submission can be made public but please keep my name anonymous.

Name: [redacted]
Phone [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Postal address: [redacted]

To whom it may concern:

I write to express grave concerns regarding the introduction of the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

My first issue is with the terminology of 'Misinformation and Disinformation' which infers that there is only one version of Information (or Truth) and that ACMA (and/or the government of the day) will be the body which decides what that is.

The fact sheet regarding this proposed bill states: "Misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as our democracy, society and economy." I would argue that the censorship of divergent points of view and the restriction on free speech would be a far greater threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australian and our democracy, society and economy than any posed by alleged 'misinformation and disinformation'.

My further concerns are about the monitoring and collection of private information by both digital platform providers and ACMA. In my opinion, this is an attack on privacy and an overreach of government.

The Bill defines misinformation and disinformation as online content that is false, misleading or deceptive, that is shared or created without an intent to deceive but can cause and contribute to serious harm. My concern is "cause or contribute to harm" is a subjective term and the person or persons who share content "without an intent to deceive" may be labelled as persons who contribute to or cause harm. Furthermore, if the definition of disinformation is misinformation that is "intentionally disseminated with the intent to deceive or cause serious harm" who is the arbiter of what is intentional?

In summary, I am opposed to the introduction of this Bill because of its potential for misuse in restricting free speech, debate and the dissemination of divergent points of view which are cornerstones of our democratic system of government. The Bill does not clearly articulate what constitutes harm and intent to deceive and therefore can be misused to quash individuals or groups who wish to speak freely about issues. This Bill seems a step towards totalitarianism and this is complete antithesis to the freedoms currently enjoyed by all Australians.

Please reconsider this Bill.

Regards
[redacted]