

Dear Misinformation Bill Review,

As our submission to the inquiry into the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023, we are writing to express our deep concerns regarding this draft legislation.

Whilst some may believe that the solution to “misinformation” or “disinformation” is more centralised control, we believe that it is far better to let people share their beliefs, respectfully disagree, debate on issues, and make up their own minds about matters.

This draft bill, however, will effectively shut down the sharing of many ideas and create so much legal uncertainty for online platforms that they will be forced to censor anything which might be considered controversial. Freedom of speech must be protected. Censorship is open to corruption.

This would be disastrous because throughout human history, hotly contested or even nearly universally disbelieved ideas have turned out, years later, to be the truth. For example, many scientific discoveries now enshrined as facts – such as the spherical Earth, the circulation of blood through the body, the sun as the centre of the solar system, etc. – were nearly unanimously opposed by almost all the leading scientists of the time. Who is to say that similar things do not occur today?

This is why we cannot trust the ability of a mere handful of people to make decisions about what should or should not be classed as misinformation or disinformation – and why this draft bill must either be dumped or at least heavily revised to remedy the major flaws it is built upon. Truth matters but what is truth should be open for debate in a secular, democratic society.

Yours sincerely,

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[Redacted contact information]