

1 Introduction

Australia does not have a strong track record of online safety. Instead, Australia has a reputation for capricious and cynical politically motivated censorship, more interested in social engineering and protecting elite interests than the common good.

2 Current State

The obvious place to begin is with the government response to the stabbing of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and Reverend Isaac Royel in April. Aside from the obvious and tautological finding that the Australian Government does not have worldwide jurisdiction, the actions of eSafety Commissioner read as an attempt by government to distract from the predictable consequences of their long term policies.

What exactly did government think would happen with 30 years of mass immigration coupled with the complete winding back the (rather successful) integration programs that existed in the 90s? One would have thought the 2005 Cronulla riots would have provided somewhat of a wake up call, but hiding declining per capita living standards in a headline growing GDP is apparently more important. The damage done to Australia can't be discussed, because there's too much money to be made for the well off in Australia. Being a bi-partisan policy, there is no allowed dissent, so all that can be done is censorship.

Being able to accurately see the world in its full beauty and despair is important. Only a month ago, I was a few car lengths behind an accident involving a cyclist and a car. Seeing the aftermath of that was certainly jarring, but it is a true account of possible consequences of being alive. It was also a direct consequence of government policies; an insistence that cyclists should share high speed roads. How does the government intend to protect me from that?

A couple of years ago, I watched my mother decline and die due to a vaccine side-effect. That was also a consequence of government policy. The desire to protect can be understandable in a parent, but a parent that never allows a child to experience the true state of the world, at age appropriate times, is committing child abuse. There is value in seeing the reality of where food comes from, from the industrialised wheat harvesting that indiscriminately kills birds and rodents, to the reality of animal slaughter to produce meat. There is value in seeing that range of human brutality as it points to the superiority of particular ideas and

cultures and the that that the line of civilisation is incredibly thin. And, of course, we are not children of the government, and it is insulting to be treated as such.

3 Trust

Largely this is a question of trust. We know from the Twitter Files¹, government was happy to take down both true information and relatively mild political dissent. No one at the Department of Home Affairs has been fired and there has been no accountability. How can there be any trust extended to another government body with that being the case? If government wants trust on matters like this, it must be seen to harshly punish public servants who clearly stepped over the line.

Instead what we see are show trial after so trial. Be it pink bats to robodebt, with ASIC currently going the same way. Government malfeasance may get some mild lip service, but no one ever gets fired, no one ever sees jail time, no matter how many lives they destroy. At this point, who would trust government to run a chook raffle, let alone decide what can and can't be seen?

4 Conclusion

Government has shown it already abuses censorship powers. Government has shown it will lie about using censorship powers. Due to the technocratic managerialism that government now operates under, responsibility is too distributed so no government employee is ever held accountable for the harms they do to individuals or the public good. Further, government has shown no interest in addressing these foundational problems. That being the case, more harm than good is done with this kind of power. It will be used for social engineering and political motivated censorship, with the occasional high profile justifiable case to distract from the real harms done. Power without responsibility is too dangerous. Therefore, it would be in the public interest to repeal the Online Safety Act 2021 completely.

I'll close with a classic quote from C.S. Lewis²:

¹<https://www.racket.news/p/twitter-files-extra-the-covid-censorship>

²C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology (Making of Modern Theology)*

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. They may be more likely to go to Heaven yet at the same time likelier to make a Hell of earth. This very kindness stings with intolerable insult. To be "cured" against one's will and cured of states which we may not regard as disease is to be put on a level of those who have not yet reached the age of reason or those who never will; to be classed with infants, imbeciles, and domestic animals.