

I'm writing today in comment to your recent statements regarding 'cyber safety laws' in Australia. While well-intended, I worry about the effect on free speech in Australia. It's frankly not the government's place to categorise certain material as 'offensive' and to place limitations on people's right to freedom of speech.

Yes, freedom of speech includes the right to say offensive and even harmful words. But laws and huge fines will not decrease bullying in Australia. This is a case where the cure is worse than the disease. Social media platforms have many features already that victims of harassment can use, such as blocking or reporting for breaking Terms & Service. Your proposed laws are unnecessary and cruel. More importantly, there is no proof that hate speech laws actually work.

I take massive issue with "[Perpetrators of cyber bullying and trolling will be forced to apologise to their victims](#)." As Australia currently goes through a trade war with China, I must remind you of the menace that is compelled speech. You can't force people to say certain words, this is something out of Mao's Chinese Cultural Revolution. When Australia faces down China, a regime that uses similar tactics, we should take the side of freedom and liberty.

I'm a Liberal Party voter and this is disappointing. As the world slips further into authoritarianism (if you don't think this bill won't be abused, you have a storm coming), Australia must remain an island of liberty. The right to offend is important. I agree that 'revenge pornography' is a vital issue, but maybe the solution is a change on copyright and privacy laws, not on free speech.

Please consider my comments when drafting legislation