

Dear Consultation,

I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to offer suggestions to help improve the Online Safety Bill 2020 before it is introduced into Parliament.

At the outset, I would like to say that I highly approve of the Image-based Abuse Section, which enhances the laws already in place that prohibit the posting online of lewd images of others without their consent.

I also appreciate the need to protect children from online bullying and so support the Cyber-bullying Section, which again enhances and extends already existing laws.

However, the new Adult Cyber-abuse Section is unnecessary and dangerous. Australian adults should be encouraged simply to disagree with those who have different opinions and should learn to ignore insults rather than complain to government bodies. And for anything more serious, like threats or slander, Australia already has laws in place which can be appealed to.

Moreover, Australians should be free to express their beliefs without fear or uncertainty - a freedom which is increasingly under threat. For example, here are just two recent examples of Australians who are being punished simply for sharing their beliefs online:

Lyle Shelton, who is being sued for \$20,000 for explaining why he believes drag queens are not for kids: <https://caldronpool.com/lyle-shelton-sued-for-20000-in-damages-after-criticizing-drag-queen-storytime/>

Dr Jereth Kok, who was suspended from his medical practice because of his Christian beliefs about gender and sexuality: <https://caldronpool.com/family-doctor-suspended-after-sharing-christian-beliefs-online/>

It is certainly the case that more and more Australians are being punished just because others are offended by their personal beliefs and The Adult Cyber-abuse Section contained within the Online Safety Bill will only exacerbate this trend.

I therefore ask you to revise the Adult Cyber-abuse Section or to remove it altogether. It is not necessary and will actually do much more harm to Australians and our society than good.

Yours sincerely,

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