

29/06/2023

Dear Federal Parliament,

A reminder from 1848: what is the point of a newspaper if you are too hungry to read it?

This is not a consultation, “with legislation to be introduced to Parliament later this year”, this is transparently an authoritarian steamroll.

Ten years ago there was a “consultation” on mandatory data retention. 98.8% of the over 5000 submissions were against mandatory data retention. With a change of government now is the time for the new government to deliver on the decade long wait for mandatory data retention to be scrapped.

What is a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians is hypernormalisation, a word coined by Alexi Yurchak in 2006 to describe a society where people just accept that everything around them in society is fake.

Australians are not safe in a society where citizens take anything the government says as not being true. There is actually a need for the government at times to be able to put forward a message, and have people accept it. An authoritarian crackdown on speech is exactly the wrong thing to do when significant portions of society have extremely strained belief in the credibility of government after being locked down for two years and faced mandatory violations of their bodily integrity. It doesn't matter whether the government was right or not, surely you can understand that having had the jackboot in the human face, tag teaming to putting in the boot on the left foot after the population voted out the boot on the right foot would be the end for any kind of trust in government. I do not want a society where people are completely demoralised and have given up seeing themselves as part of the society presented to them. That is not a safer society.

The government needs to build back some capital of social trust. The government needs to step back and defer to individuals as to what constitutes the reality and the world that we live in. An authoritarian push at this time would be a social

catastrophe, and the proposed parasitic takeover of the internet as a propaganda arm of government would be the last straw.

It is superfluous to pick apart the fact that you use the word “harm” to define the word “harm”. When you give us the snake eating its own tail instead of a definition, that is a clear giveaway that you intend to mean anything you don’t like.

Making it a crime to have a website where a person, or many people, can speak, without doing the government paperwork for compliance with the state-imposed reality, is the stepping off point for citizens to part ways with any idea of a self-concept of being, or wanting to be, law-abiding citizens. That will not make Australia safer.

Also, you have clearly taken the internet for granted. The whole point of the internet is the essentially zero barrier to entry. If you went back to the start of the internet and tried making ham radio bulletin boards or Usenet do paperwork for compliance with state-imposed thought and speech, the internet would be nothing more than a dial tone, and in another 25 years you can expect it to be a similar wasteland. By trying to eradicate the bad, all you will actually achieve is the prevention of the emergence of the good, as citizens absolutely reject any compliance with the speech cartel. The platforms that comply will cease to exist, and what replaces them will be something you’re not going to like.

Metadata retention was almost instantly bypassed by VPNs. You’re really not going to like the “VPN” for non-approved expression.

Haven’t you worked out that when an authoritarian government calls something misinformation or disinformation, that automatically signals to the public that it is true?

And while I’m here, where’s the fast broadband I already paid for a decade ago, hmm??????? The absolute gall to be shrieking about speech instead of delivering bandwidth.

In Disgust, Default User