

Discussion promotes democracy.
Democracy promotes discussion.
All ideas need to be debatable, not censored.
Protect free speech.

Please do not bring in laws curtailing mis/dis information for the following reasons.

1. Free speech is the cornerstone of democracy any restrictions to this undermines democracy.
2. Democracy is founded on the right to free speech, regardless of whether or not you agree with the other viewpoint. Censorship of any free speech is a loss of our human rights.
3. I want to know what other people think, even if it's extreme and I disagree with their opinion. This promotes discussion and discussion leads to a better educated and freer society. You suggest that misinformation is 'harmful' but I contend that it is less harmful than censorship.
4. Curbing mis/dis information will not apply to mainstream media because they operate internationally and their content is controlled by corporations. They are beyond the reach of government, whether you recognise that fact or not. As an example, it is corporations that advertise betting on TV. No one wants it (morally) but the corporations found a loophole (or a payoff) and the corporations get their way. Mainstream media has and does use misinformation.
5. It will only restrict the voice of the small operators, and they are the ones who do the callout about things like corruption, because they are not owned by the corporations and therefore not restricted by corporate 'rules' and corporate interests. This is vital for democracy and human rights to survive. They help keep the others honest.
6. Where do you draw the line and who decides where the line is drawn? The drawing of any line is dangerous and leads to control, corruption, opinion and power by vested interests, some of which people don't even know exists until a few brave and lone voices call it out. That avenue of democracy will be lost with this proposal.
7. Targeting digital platforms and not mainstream corporations is undemocratic and a slide into corporate rule.
8. People have the right to be their own 'fact checkers' or else you have the fox guarding the hen house. Corporations not only control the statistics but also what is released on the news. Their monopoly profits by supplying the 'approved' solutions whilst also being the 'fact checkers' and controlling the narrative. Your legislation will extinguish all meaningful discussion and opposition to anything other than the corporate voice.
9. You are overestimating the harm of mis/dis information and underestimating the harm of censorship. As an example, we have always had people predicting aliens or the end of the world. This minor inconvenience is worth the price to keep speech free and stay uncensored.
10. Galileo was imprisoned for saying the earth went around the sun. They restricted his right to free speech and called it misinformation. Your proposal is a version of that except where the church restricted Galileo, it's the corporations or well-meaning but ill-advised politicians that aim to restrict free speech if it doesn't fit the current narrative.
11. Who decides what is mis/dis information? It will be outsourced to corporations who have their own agenda, or AI that is programmed by corporations, or a government body that is easily bought/influenced by corporations or any body that has the financial power to influence. You cannot be blind to the real and potential corruption in politics/government and government bodies both past and present, or naive about it being there in the future.

12. Any law can be seen for its positive effect but the real discussion needs to be about any possible abuse or negative effect. Any change to free speech is a real threat to democracy and a definite potential for corruption and abuse, so it needs to be judged from this viewpoint.
13. We used to laugh at the censorship rules of communist countries. Now we have sadly become this. Can you not see how badly this could become the undoing of democracy.
14. Please watch <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-19/leave-no-dark-corner/10264302>
15. Government overreach should be curtailed, not freedom of speech. It is too high a price to pay.
16. Enough of the nanny state. Citizens need to take responsibility for their own lives and decisions without handing it over to the government.

Your quote –

"Mis and disinformation sows division within the community, undermines trust and can threaten public health and safety."

should be disregarded as misinformation however I will defend your right to say it.

"Division" is healthy debate and questioning, not division.

"Trust" should always be questioned and never taken at face value.

Everything becomes a "threat to public health and safety" when laws prevent citizens for doing due diligence themselves on information presented to them and researching it for themselves. It is not the job of Governments to be the gatekeepers of information.

Your quote should read -

"Mis and disinformation fosters discussion within the community, educates people about keeping a healthy balance between trust and mistrust, and alerts people to question government and corporate narratives in order to keep them accountable."

In summary, does this proposal do too much harm to democracy? – absolutely. Therefore free speech must be protected above all, and not be curbed for any reason because all reasons are too high a price to pay for our freedom. Everyone has the right to know what extreme and moderate, groups are thinking. That is far less dangerous than losing free speech.

People also have the right to express their opinions without censorship, especially when it is not the currently held societal viewpoint. Debate on all viewpoints is the way forward to a better society, not 'one opinion fits all'.

It is unethical to appoint people to decide, for others, what is mis/disinformation.

Please be the person who speaks out to protect free speech. Please let that be your legacy.