

I'm writing with regards to the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 to let you know my thoughts.

I understand that this is a Federal Bill and yet I feel that it is VITAL that everyday Australians contact each level of Government due to the implications of this ill-advised bill on our Democracy.

The Oxford Dictionary defines democracy as "a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives."

It is essential that free and open (and yet respectful) dialogue is open and continuing.

I'm old enough to remember life before the Internet and social media and often wish for a simpler system of communication. It seems that we are less connected as a society and more polarised.

Trust in all levels of Government is at an all-time low and therefore a bill filtering what we listen to with Government communications exemption from this Bill indicates a desire to destroy Democracy and herald in Authoritarian Dystopian nightmare.

Please do your best to squash this Bill before it even reaches Parliament. There are many issues that need addressing – the best way to deal with these will be by engaging all of us in open conversations.

I have been researching Citizen's Assemblies – a way of involving everyday people to assist (not bypass) Government. This has worked in a number of jurisdictions and on a number of different topics. I'd love to see this tactic on the proposed Voice that seems to have degenerated into a polarised screaming match, and whatever the outcome, will divide the nation on race.

All people of good will desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. Everyone who has made Australia their home, whether recent migrants or 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> generation Australians would love to see Indigenous Australians prosper. How we do this will not come from top-down dictates from Canberra or unelected NGOs from Overseas. Change will only occur at grass-root levels, from neighbours looking into each other's eyes, hearing their stories and trying (as much as possible) to walk a mile in the other man's shoes.

<https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/what-is-a-citizens-jury/>