

20 August 2023

**SUBMISSION: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.**

Dear Committee,

I strongly oppose the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. The powers the proposed bill will grant to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (AMCA) will remove the fundamental right of freedom of speech for all Australians.

In particular, Australians who hold strong views on social issues which do not fit the publicised norm, created via media and government propaganda, are at risk of having their opinions incorrectly categorised as 'misinformation and disinformation'. Christian values for instance are the foundation of our Australian Society, our fundamental freedoms, and our constitution and yet are continually attacked and undermined as being outdated and no longer valid – this bill would open the possibility for AMCA to shut down any social view they do not agree with, in the name of 'misinformation' and 'disinformation'.

It is not right that the Government and Media are exempt under this proposed bill, while companies are not. In essence this suggests the Government and Media are the absolute truth in all areas, in which they most certainly are not. If they are exempt, they can push whatever agenda (good or bad) that they like. Can anyone guarantee, once policing mechanisms are established, that neither ACMA nor any future Government would seek to extend laws to cover private messages? Or to text messages?

Furthermore, the proposed penalties under this Bill are unnecessarily excessive.

Social media exists so people can have a voice no matter what their social views. People have a right to choose who to listen to and what they wish to say! This is a fundamental for Democracy. Democracy should never have information police! Or one would have to ask - are we really in a democracy?

**THIS BILL MUST BE SCRAPPED!**

Thank you for providing Australian's with the opportunity to contribute on this critical issue and for taking the time to review my submission.

Yours Sincerely,

C.Douglas