

**Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Misinformation and Disinformation bill 2024 inquiry – Representative  
Sample**

On 19 September 2024, the Senate referred the provisions of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 (the bill) to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (the committee) for report by 25 November 2024.

Submissions closed on 30 September 2024. The committee received approximately 8,000 contributions from individuals. The committee has published the following as a representative sample.

## Sample 1

To the Members of Government of Australia

I am writing to express my opposition to the mid information and disinformation bill and anything that may sensor free speech.

There are many problems with the Bill which I would like to highlight. Firstly, it is an attack on freedom of speech that is inconsistent with Australia's international human rights obligations and the Bill enables government bureaucrats and big tech to silence and censor speech that goes far beyond reasonable limitation. The Bill will give government the power to silence religious and political speech that contradicts prevailing ideologies and political messaging. The Bill fails to include mechanisms to protect valid expression of opinion and belief or to ensure that there are clear and defined limits on suppression of speech. The Bill includes a vague and ideological definition of "harm" which risks it being weaponised to shutdown legitimate speech on pressing social issues. The Bill does not require mechanisms that will hold digital service providers liable for excessive and onerous policing of legitimate speech.

The exclusion of government-authorised content from this censorship regime is hypocritical and inconsistent and will establish an asymmetry that results in one rule for government and another rule for Australians in what they can say. The Bill gives ACMA excessive powers to compel owners and private users of digital platforms to provide information and evidence about misinformation and disinformation that is a worrying breach of privacy. The Bill does not provide a sufficient standard of accountability and oversight for misuse of censorship powers.

The few provisions that have been included to acknowledge the competing right to freedom of expression are tokenistic and do not satisfy the high bar required in international law for the interference with fundamental rights of freedom of expression.

The severity of the penalties for failing to comply with the misinformation codes and standards and for failing to provide evidence requested by ACMA is excessive and will provide a 'chilling effect' on free speech.

I request a public hearing into the bill and any such bill. The public must have a say into this bill and any that affects their right to free speech.

Yours truly

### **Sample 2**

Senator, this communication to you and the government is to make known of my objection to this bill.

It's unimaginable that our country would ever consider such legislation. To place any restrictions on our freedom of speech is not part of our culture or constitution. Our country that we the citizens have been so proud to say we are free. Free to vote, peacefully protest, free to choose, freedom of speech is a fundamental human right.

I believe that this bill to be proposed at all is insane.

We the citizens of Australia voted you into power and we can vote you out.

This bill must be brought into public debate immediately. Every citizen has the right to decide on this bill which has possible consequences on our lives.

To fight misinformation/ disinformation you don't do it with less information or information that a few people will deem to be misinformation for everyone but it's fought by more information. Honesty and transparency. Unfortunately the government lost the people's confidence because of lies and their own misinformation with no accountability.

Instead of gagging social media politicians need to regain the trust of the public, the public you work for.

### **Sample 3**

To our representatives/Australian Senators,

I am sure you are aware but please consider the bigger picture for the future of Australia, our grandchildren and grandchildren's children.

I am writing to you to ask that you uphold the democratic rights of Australians and oppose the Misinformation Bill.

There is no harm if you are unsure but so much harm if it goes ahead. We must oppose the Misinformation Bill.

Thank you for your time,

### **Sample 4**

I am deeply concerned about the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 currently under review. Australian law is already deficient in terms of protections for freedom of expression, a right enshrined in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This Bill, with its vague and subjective terms, would only further erode this fundamental right by extending the scope of prohibited speech. We need laws that protect speech, not restrict it.

The potential for civil penalties against digital platforms could lead to overly cautious measures, resulting in the removal of lawful content that is simply contentious but not harmful. This would disproportionately impact political, social, or minority viewpoints, ultimately stifling public discourse.

I urge the Senate to reconsider the implications of this Bill and to ultimately abandon it. Australia needs legislation that upholds freedom of expression and fosters open dialogue, not laws that suppress dissenting voices.

### **Sample 5**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I take this opportunity to express my concerns about this Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill. Also, I would be grateful if my name is not included in any public version of this submission.

I summarise my main concerns as follows:

Our democracy is at risk if its citizens are not able to properly engage in public debate? This Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill curtails the ability of Australian citizens to freely express themselves.

I am particularly concerned the Government and entities such as established media sources, as well as banking/financial institutions are exempt from this Bill, (despite having misinformed the public in the past). if we are a Free people, then we should be entitled to fully express ourselves as well, even on the internet, and any social media platform.

The Misinformation Bill makes the Government an arbiter of truth, yet all governments have made mistakes. Arbitration of truth shouldn't be managed by bureaucrats, like ACMA and/or the eSafety Commissioner. Effective and free debate from all parties will yield the most true and just outcome - a principal our culture is based on.

Likewise, all Australians have a stake in their health, therefore Australians need to be able to express their views and any relevant information pertaining to Public Health or Preventative Health Measures. It is very concerning that the free speech of Australians is being curtailed by this Bill, when matters of Health have a deep and intimate impact on our lives and the lives of our families.

I would appreciate if my concerns are considered and this Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill is opposed.

Yours Truly,

### **Sample 6**

To the honourable Senators,

Please stop this misinformation bill and protect free speech. Everyone has the right to their own beliefs and ideas. No one, certainly not the politicians or some tech giant, should have the right to stop this.

Free speech is the fundamental right of every person and we see in countries where free speech is squashed we see dictatorship as who ends up deciding what can be said and what can't is the politicians in power. Debate is necessary for everyone to consider the points of view not just promote one side of the argument. Free speech is the sign of a healthy society.

Please keep our society in Australia healthy

### **Sample 7**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed mis- and disinformation bill currently under consideration by the Albanese government. This bill poses a significant threat to free speech and political discourse in Australia by enabling the pre-emptive censorship of content on social media platforms.

While I recognize the importance of addressing the spread of harmful false information, this bill casts an excessively broad net that would censor not only misinformation but also legitimate political debate and justified criticism of institutions, including banks. This will result in a situation where ordinary citizens' opinions, even when valid, could be taken down or effectively shadow-banned, preventing crucial voices from being heard in public discourse.

The bill threatens the principles of free speech, as it shifts the control of political debate away from the public and towards the government and mainstream media. Social media has become an important platform for political expression, and this bill will silence the very voices that rely on it to share ideas and criticisms.

I urge the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications to reconsider this bill. It is essential that we protect our rights to free speech and ensure that political debate remains open, fair, and representative of all voices in our democracy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 8**

I call for public hearing for the new proposed misinformation laws as it stands we will lose our freedom of speech I ask the government to abandon these proposed laws and protect our rights to speak freely Thanks

### **Sample 9**

To the Members of Parliament,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed bill that grants the government power to determine what is "true" and restrict free speech. This bill represents a dangerous overreach and threatens the democratic principles that allow open debate and the free exchange of ideas, essential to a healthy society.

No government should have unchecked authority to decide what the public can or cannot say. Rather than protecting the public, this bill risks silencing dissent and eroding free speech, which is a fundamental right in any democracy. I respectfully urge you to reject this bill and preserve the freedom of expression for all Australians.

Sincerely,

## Sample 10

I have discussed this matter at length with well informed colleagues of mine and I agree with and support the commentary below, already submitted to you! In my view the disastrous decisions and actions by all Governments during the Covid Pandemic period 2020-2022 and the Voice 2023 campaign are perfect examples of why this proposed legislation is both ill-considered and dangerous.

*"I am completely opposed to the proposed legislation.*

*It represents a grave attack on free speech and the inalienable human right to hold political and personal opinions, to express those opinions, and to receive and impart information as they see fit. **We do not want government making such decisions for us that are definitely not in our best interests.***

*The legislation contradicts the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has underpinned democratic societies for over 70 years. **How dare you override this?***

*The legislation is discriminatory by its nature, in that large and powerful groups such as governments, corporate media and, it seems, universities are exempt because they are filled with ultra-leftists lecturers, professors and their boards, while the **general citizenry are to be subject to penalty for exercising the same rights as the aforementioned groups. How is that possible in a democracy?** What happened to a free and fair Australia?*

*That **social media platforms will essentially be the gatekeepers of all information, other than from the special aforementioned exempt groups,** is even more alarming. The threat of huge fines will keep them erring on the side of the Government's seemingly preferred position: to limit exposure of any viewpoint that doesn't suit the narrative of the government of the day. **You will not be in power indefinitely so this will likely rebound on you.***

*We have had over the past several years considerable experience in this arena. Well-meaning and well-informed people were routinely and indiscriminately de-platformed, only to be vindicated later with official recognition that the opinions and information being published by those cancelled was, in fact, accurate information, and information that served the public interest.*

*We don't need a self-serving nanny state to manage the information flow from, to, and between the public. People who take an interest in the subject matter will generally be able to discern accurate information from inaccurate information, given enough exposure to alternative viewpoints. We saw that time and time again **during the covid response. So much information that was denounced as "misinformation" was later admitted by governments to be 100% accurate.***

*In my opinion, it's a matter of national shame that this legislation is even being considered, and it's outrageous that it is being pushed through in such haste with so little time for public education and comment.*

***Do not do this!"***

## Sample 11

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications PO Box 6100 Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

29th September 2024

Re: Opposition to the Disapproved Information Censorship Bill

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Disapproved Information Censorship Bill. While I understand the need to address misinformation in our society, the proposed legislation raises significant concerns that outweigh its intended benefits. Below are four key issues that I believe the Senate must carefully consider:

- 1. Threat to Freedom of Speech and Open Debate** The bill grants sweeping powers to government authorities to censor "disapproved" information. This overly broad definition could stifle free speech and hinder open, democratic debate. In a democratic society, it is essential that citizens have the right to access and share a diverse range of opinions, even those that may be controversial or challenge the prevailing narrative. This bill risks creating an environment where only government-approved information is allowed, which runs counter to the principles of a free society.
- 2. Lack of Clear Accountability and Oversight** The proposed legislation lacks a clear mechanism for oversight and accountability of those responsible for determining what qualifies as disapproved information. Without transparent and independent review processes, there is a risk of misuse or abuse of power by government officials or agencies. The absence of checks and balances in this bill could lead to arbitrary censorship, undermining public trust in governmental institutions and processes.
- 3. Erosion of Press Freedom and Journalistic Integrity** This bill poses a significant threat to press freedom by placing undue constraints on journalists and media outlets who rely on access to information, including government criticism and alternative viewpoints, to report news. Journalists may be discouraged from reporting on sensitive or controversial issues for fear of falling foul of the bill's provisions, leading to self-censorship. Such an environment is detrimental to a vibrant, independent media sector that serves as a watchdog for democracy.
- 4. Negative Impact on Public Discourse and Innovation** Censorship of disapproved information can limit healthy public discourse and the exchange of ideas necessary for innovation and social progress. By creating a chilling effect on individuals, researchers, and organizations, this bill could stifle creativity, discourage dissent, and prevent the development of new ideas or solutions to societal challenges. The bill's vague language makes it difficult to know where the line is drawn, further exacerbating this chilling effect.

In conclusion, while addressing misinformation is important, the Disapproved Information Censorship Bill threatens to undermine key democratic principles such as freedom of speech, press freedom, and open debate. I urge the Senate to reject this bill in its current form and instead seek alternatives that protect the public from misinformation while upholding fundamental rights and freedoms.

## Sample 12

Good afternoon,

Thank you for this opportunity to be part of this discussion.

Social Media and Digital Platforms have more advantages than disadvantages in our modern society. These include networking across the world whether its your personal brand, friendships, working, entertainment and so on. Its given us many oportunities in so many ways. We have 'bad' players in every aspect of our lives including politics. Therefore, it stands to reason that individuals spreading 'misinformation' on social media is no exception as well. However, I dont believe we need to push the pendulum to the other end and have a government body control the social media platforms where it is no longer enjoyable or beneficial to use those outlets.

In my opinion we have still not established what 'misinformation' is. Who decides what is misinformation? Hundreds of years ago we thought the world was flat and if I had said its round at the time, is that misinformation? Is misinformation when we dont agree with the general consensus of others. Diversity of opinions with respect makes a strong thriving society, especially as our world continues to evolve.

We the Australian public should be all allowed our views and opinions and to have control over them. Its up to the individual using the social media platform to decide whether they want to read or engage in that content. As for younger members of our society, I would recommend that parents primarily and perhaps teachers should take more of a active role in monitoring what their children watch and post.

We dont need stricter standards or regulations over social media platforms. Its very dangerous to implement such a Bill as it will eventually erode free speech and trust within our society, especially when mainstream media are exempt from this bill and can promote whatever they wish.

In conclusion, the Australian Public are intelligent versatile people who come from diverse backgrounds. We (the Australian People) are very capable of deciding what we want to watch, promote or post on social media. The vast majority enjoy the benefits that social media brings and it is up to the individual to make a informed choice as to what they wish to engage with on social media platforms. I dont believe its the govenments role to make tech platforms responsible for limiting harms from the content they serve. Its the role of each Australian to be responsibe and aware of what they are watching and engaging in, including guardians who are in carer roles.



### **Sample 13**

To: Senate Environment and Communications Committees Secretariat.

I , express my strong opposition to the proposed 'Combatting Misinformation/Disinformation Bill' on the grounds that it poses a significant threat to free speech in Australia. Any legislation that empowers the government or regulatory bodies to control or censor the flow of information, whether it be online or in public forums, risks infringing on the fundamental right to free expression. Such censorship can easily be abused, stifling open debate, suppressing diverse opinions, and undermining democratic principles.

Furthermore, I demand that the government hold public hearings on this bill. The short timeframe allocated for the inquiry indicates a lack of intention to fully engage the public, which raises concerns about transparency and accountability. If necessary, the inquiry period should be extended to ensure ample time for robust public debate and thorough scrutiny of the bill. The public deserves the opportunity to voice its concerns and safeguard its freedoms.

This bill should not move forward without significant consultation and input from the Australian people.

Regards,

### **Sample 14**

Dear Senators,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. The bill is a guise to "protect Australians" from harmful misinformation- this bill, poses a serious threat to freedom of speech and democratic principles.

The broad definitions of misinformation and harm, combined with the immense powers granted to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), create significant risks for the suppression of legitimate public debate. Particularly alarming is the exemption granted to government content, which would allow state-sanctioned information to be protected while dissenting opinions could be censored. This imbalance echoes the practices of authoritarian regimes, where government narratives are enforced, and opposition is silenced.

Specifically, government content may be exempt from being classified as misinformation, creating a situation where the government's narrative is protected, while opposing views could be censored. This imbalance echoes practices in authoritarian societies, where state-controlled information is promoted while alternative perspectives are suppressed

The lack of clear safeguards for free speech and the potential for abuse of power are troubling.

Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of our democracy. Laws aimed at combating misinformation must not undermine the very freedoms they seek to protect. I urge you to consider these implications and reject the bill.

Australia's democracy is founded on open debate and the exchange of diverse ideas, even those that may be controversial or unpopular. Please protect these values by ensuring that any legislation preserves our democratic freedoms.

Sincerely,

## Sample 15

To the Committee,

These proposed changes to the law are deeply concerning and fundamentally flawed; while misinformation and disinformation are concerning problems, they are not ones that are well addressed by empire building within government departments and closing down free debate.

The senate should take the opportunity to reject these changes, and live up to our modern anthem: let us rejoice, and remain one and free.

1. Bad information is not fixed by silence, but by better speech The first fundamental flaw in the bill's approach is in its attempt to ban bad speech. This will fail in two ways. First some bad speech will always be able to be broadcast, even with the best of intent, the censors being endorsed by this bill will only ever have so much time in the day, and as always, a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still lacing up its boots. But in a world where misinformation is "banned", any such lie that is successfully broadcast will have the imprimatur of truth, and be that much more effective as a result. While wading through misinformation is annoying, it is better for people to be aware of how widespread it is and build up an immunity, than to attempt to suppress it entirely, and, as with non-metaphorical virality, accidentally give rise to a superbug. The second way this will fail is by misclassifying true statements as misinformation and censoring them. Misclassifying true statements about important issues as false is not a rare occurrence in politics. Would we truly want it to be illegal to disagree with the claim that refugees threw innocent children overboard once the Minister's Fact Checkers have decided to agree with the government of the day's claims? More recently, of course, we have seen various items of "misinformation" being first banned then walked back as they're revealed to be far more likely than first alleged, such as the origins of Covid19, the risks of the fast-tracked vaccines, or in the US, the veracity of information on the Hunter Biden laptop. Censorship will always be most eagerly embraced by those with something to hide, and providing the next Minister that creates the next Robodebt scheme with more tools to cover up their malfeasance is not in Australia's interest.

2. Departmental empire building is not a wise basis on which to make laws

It is a fundamental nature of bureaucracy that it will attempt to grow beyond the country's need for it: after all, a larger department is rewarded with a larger budget. As such, having ACMA run an inquiry into whether ACMA should gain more powers should not be expected to come to an unbiased conclusion. And indeed: the inquiry into the preliminary draft received 2,400 public submissions and 20,000 private comments, so many of which were critical of the approach, that those "Supportive of action" were separated into their own section of three bullet points, out of 47 total. That should never have been taken as an indication to make a few tweaks around the edges and push on anyway, but rather to abandon the approach entirely. While it may be logical under an economically rationalist mindset for the department to want to continue down that path – seeing only increases to the department's influence, power and budget if things work out, and a return to the status quo if the bill doesn't pass – both the government and the parliament as a whole should be able to take a broader, and wiser, view.

3. Rushing important legislation is not acceptable

Our parliamentary model ensures that a government with a majority in the House can always stymie debate there; but when it also attempts to rush an issue through the Senate it should be met with severe pushback. While we no longer have the balance of power handed over to the Democrats on a mandate of keeping the bastards we elect to government honest, the opposition and cross-bench should certainly feel no qualms in slapping down attempts by the government to bypass democratic debate. Presenting a controversial bill to the Senate, with a schedule that barely has time for written comment and has no time at all for open hearings should not be considered acceptable. Even if this were a good bill – and it is not – that procedural chicanery alone should be enough for it to be rejected wholesale. Even if it were a bill that was legitimately urgent and it was in the nation's interest for immediate passage – and this bill is certainly not that – it should be amended to have a clause setting a six month sunset, with a clause requiring extensive public consultation as part of drafting and introducing a more permanent implementation of the bill.

In summary: This bill should not be passed, nor amended.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 16**

Dear Senator Lines,

You cannot "save democracy" by censoring free speech. Free speech IS democracy.

Censorship is not Australian. Sunlight is the best disinfectant and that this removal of human rights has even been presented to our parliament is a betrayal of Australians.

The sad irony of debating the removal of our freedoms on the 11th of November when we remember those who fought and died for our freedoms is an affront to our nation.

The parliament may be misjudging the Australian people if it believes we will not fight this travesty until it is defeated - our children and their children deserve the free country that they were born into.

Yours faithfully,

### **Sample 17**

Dear Senator,

I'm writing regarding the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024, which has now passed the House of Representatives.

This bill is a disturbing overreach, creating a "Ministry of Truth" to decide what is "true" or "false."

Major concern when we've repeatedly misled by people in power who are NOT incentivised to do what is best for the people, such as with COVID vaccine safety.

Now, this bill suggests they alone can define misinformation, while exempting major media allies.

Why should we trust those who themselves spread misinformation?

This is a direct threat to free speech and democracy. Australians deserve the right to make their own judgments without government interference. Censoring information under the pretense of "protection" only deepens public distrust and will destroy what has built us to be one of the best places on Earth.

I urge you to vote against this bill.

If you spend any time speaking to the general public, you'll know we're on the brink of a mass awakening and true public trust can only be restored by upholding free speech, not restricting it.

Your name can be on the right side of history.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 18**

To David Shoebridge and the Committee,

I am again writing to you both to oppose this MAD Bill as it could reshape online communication in Australia and lead to possible crackdowns on differing viewpoints. This goes against our human rights and also jeopardises our freedom of expression and indeed the very essence of democracy, where diverse perspectives are valued.

Citizens should have the power to shape their future through discussion and debate (which used to be taught in schools). And differing opinion could be censored. Even accurate (truthful) information could be deemed misleading.

This gives government-appointed officials and fact-checkers far too much power and authority and this is an infringement on free speech and an assault on democracy itself.

Reject this MAD Bill

Regards

### **Sample 19**

To Whom It May Concern

I oppose the Misinformation/Disinformation Bill and anything that censors free speech. To push this through without enough time for public consultation is appalling and sends a clear message on the Government's lack of consideration for the freedoms of the people of this country. Our government is falling under the global push on censorship which is heading to a dictatorship and not putting our country and our people first. A total lack of leadership.

Regards

### **Sample 20**

Dear Committee Secretary, Senator Standing Committee on Environment and Communications,

I write with sincere concern about what this bill will mean and I do not agree with the Communications Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 (the bill), nor will I support the changes to deny free speech and see it as a fundamental right of all humans to be able have a voice in issue. I do not wish at all for this and any other bill/legislation to divert the truth in any way shape or form and therefore call for Public Hearings so these issues and any related issues be heard by the people and for the people to have clearer understanding of what exactly this will mean for all Australians.

I repeat I am not in any way support this bill and I find it extraordinary after the last years when Australians look to leadership and this is what you think is ok. IT's NOT OK.

regards,

### **Sample 21**

Greetings, Senators,

Bin this Bill. It's anti freedom of speech and it's trying to live in the past. Whether governments realise it or not, communications have changed.

Sure, there's a lot of rubbish on the net. Let the people work it out themselves.

As to trusting governments to decide what is and isn't true, well, that's ridiculous in light that many in the Australian parliament can't decide what a woman is!

Passing this would make you look out of touch and ridiculous.

Yours faithfully,

### **Sample 22**

Dear Senate,

Free speech is one of the cornerstones of the success of western democracy and I am outraged that such a bill would even be proposed in a supposedly free country.

The idea that the government can decide whether a social media post is Misinformation or Disinformation is nothing more than government censorship in disguise and should be strongly opposed by all parties to preserve the freedoms that we all enjoy.

I request that the senate should strongly reject this bill. Those who do not do so will be remembered in the next election.

Kind Regards

### **Sample 23**

My Name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am writing to voice my objection to the above Bill.

This Bill will affect my freedom of speech and the freedoms we have enjoyed as citizens of Australia. This will affect my ability to speak freely, write, text or send emails without looking over my shoulder or scrutinising every word I write.

I therefore declare my opposition to the Misinformation and Disinformation Bill.

### **Sample 24**

Please allow my rejection of the Misinformation Bill.

To set up a committee which has power to decide what is disinformation and what is not, is a form of censorship and control of free speech.

To limit comments and suggestions etc, to one week shows how far the government is prepared to go to limit free speech and quench objections. The government, therefore, is guilty of Disinformation and Misinformation itself.

Thanking you for allowing my contribution to count,

Your sincerely

### **Sample 25**

I am writing to express my profound opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. This bill constitutes a direct attack on the fundamental right to free speech in Australia and must be rejected entirely. Free speech is a cornerstone of democracy, protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Australia has been a signatory since 1948. This proposed legislation, however, would severely restrict that right by empowering the government to define and police what constitutes "misinformation" or "disinformation," terms which are inherently subjective and prone to manipulation. Furthermore, I want to make it perfectly clear that this bill should not be passed in any form. Even with amendments, the legislation poses a dangerous precedent for future government overreach, potentially silencing voices critical of the state or other dominant entities. The balance between protecting the public from harmful information and safeguarding free speech is delicate, but this bill overwhelmingly tips the scales towards censorship and suppression. Moreover, I believe that any legislator who votes in favour of this bill is acting in a manner that is tantamount to treason. Supporting legislation that suppresses public discourse serves the interests of foreign powers seeking to undermine our democracy, rather than the Australian people. The bill, in its current state, facilitates this threat by handing disproportionate control over speech to the government and large media entities. The most egregious aspect of this legislation is the double standard it sets by allowing exemptions for state and media entities. This is a blatant case of "one rule for me, and another for thee," which undermines public trust in both government and media institutions. If misinformation and disinformation are to be truly combated, it must be done transparently and applied equally to all parties, rather than selectively enforced. Additionally, I strongly urge the Committee to hold public hearings on this matter, allowing the broader community to become more aware of the gross negligence displayed by the government in attempting to push this legislation through. The public deserves more time to understand the serious implications of this bill and to voice their concerns. Such a sweeping change to the framework of public discourse cannot be rushed through without comprehensive consultation and scrutiny. For all these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 in its entirety. Our democracy depends on the protection of free speech, and this bill represents a dangerous step away from that core value. Thank you for considering my submission.

Regards,

### **Sample 26**

Dear Sir,

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed Bill as it appears to be an attack on Free Speech. The Australian Human Rights Commission is against as is the Federal Opposition. Submissions have to be sent by 30 September which is a very short time for public discourse. At the very least there should be an extensive public enquiry into the Bill.

Kind Regards,

### **Sample 27**

To whom it may concern

Thank you for giving the opportunity to give feedback to the proposed law.

I believe that censorship under the terms of disinformation and misinformation is open to a very broad interpretation, and makes this bill potentially more dangerous than any perceived problem it seeks to address.

Whilst understanding some of the problems that exist with social media, I feel that everyone has the right to their individual opinion. I am an older Australian who remembers when there was no TV, and I personally do not subscribe to Facebook Twitter etc however I realise there are good and bad influences with all media. This does not mean that the general public needs to be spoon fed, and I believe that critical thinking should be promoted in a positive and respectful way.

Who then is the arbiter of truth? Who decides in their wisdom what is the truth? What checks and balances are there too ensure that the supposed truth is actually the truth? An individual's truth is relative to their personal experience and does not make them a dishonest person in telling their story, just as science is related to personal findings in studies. These studies very often give different results which is not bad, and can indeed open the debate to further review. This I believe is healthy for our society.

Things in the past have been thought to be true and later proved not to be, this is life, how can we have a healthy debate with such a law that controls the media by the government?

Whilst I agree that there are certain unsavoury items that have need to be monitored and removed, i.e. content encouraging such things as child sexual abuse and extremist violence, I feel like this bill is very vague in what is actually going to be censored, and may lead to a potential loss of free speech and sharing of ideas critical to our democracy. Indeed, free speech is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy.

The universal declaration of Human Rights 1948, article 19 states:-

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers.

This agreement was created at the time for a purpose, and I believe we should abide by this agreement to protect our human rights as an Australian family.

Thank you in advance for considering my submission on this matter.

I remain, yours faithfully

### **Sample 28**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I would like it noted that I vehemently oppose the introduction of the above Bill on the basis that the wording is intentionally vague, obscure and deceptive. Furthermore, I oppose any measures the Government of the day (regardless of which party that may be) wishes to impose now or in the future, which will result in censorship and/or criminalisation of posting an opinion or opposition on social media.

Governments, or bureaucrats, should not be the arbiters of truth. Mis-information, Dis-Information, Mal-information, etc. are merely terms to discredit those who show opposition to the narratives and agendas pushed by the powers-that-be and are used to justify more and more authoritarian behaviour by our governments. Governments are Public Servants, Servants of the People who elect them to act ON OUR BEHALF.

I believe this Bill will impede our Freedom of Speech in this country. Something our ancestors fought so hard in both World Wars to protect.

As a citizen of this country, I do not want to be told what and how to think, what I can and can not say, either in my own home or on social media.

Australia already has criminal laws in place to deal with the many different crimes plaguing our society. Speech and voicing an opinion is not, and should not be considered a crime.

I demand that public hearings be held into this Bill prior to it being voted on.

Regards,

### **Sample 29**

I am writing to express my grave concerns about the Mis and Disinformation Bill, which is a potential threat to democracy. This Bill risks democracy by granting ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner powers to censor online content without clear criteria, potentially stifling legitimate differences in opinion. Individuals such as myself can be fined under Section 205E of the Broadcasting Services Act for circumventing or undermining ACMA's misinformation code.

It is a person's fundamental right to think, write and watch what they deem suitable for themselves. The citizens of Australia have NOT voted for this and the government should not position itself as the sole arbiter of truth.

No-one should have the ability to determine what is 'mis/disinformation', that's up to the individual to determine what they believe to be true under our democracy and Constitution, which can only be altered by a Referendum!

Australians are becoming increasingly tired of government overreach. I do not think I am alone in saying that my intelligence is continually being undermined and that the government thinks it needs to step in and make decisions on my behalf.

If the Government chooses to do something to restore trust amongst the people; they can stop attacking our liberties, and they can let us live our lives accordingly instead of interfering in them, plus they could uphold Australians' rightful Freedom of Speech, protected by law.

This bill does nothing to restore public confidence between the Government and the people, if anything this further degrades that already tenuous trust.

Thank you for considering my concerns and I ask you, to do the right thing and stand up for Freedom of Speech & Expression and vote down this bill.

Kind regards



### Sample 30

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am saddened and uneasy about where our country is heading in regards to the Governments proposed Mis/Dis/Information Bill and I urge you to not approve it. I am happy to be identified as the author of this submission, when you publish it.

In particular I am concerned about the following issues:

The Misinformation Bill jeopardizes Free Speech by empowering ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner to censor speech on the internet.

The Misinformation Bill threatens free and open discourse by allowing the Government to pick and choose what is labelled as 'truth' and what is 'misinformation', a very dangerous precedent to set and the bill would impose a set of laws that will be open to abuse by future Governments. If Government positions are strong, then open discourse will bear this out. If so-called 'misinformation' is broadcast online - then more discourse is the antidote and open discussion will see the truth win out.

The Bills' censorship also risks public health by potentially allowing only the government's pandemic views, thus jeopardizing free discourse and resembling a healthcare dictatorship.

The Misinformation Bill makes the Government an arbiter of truth because it exempts itself from these laws despite frequently being wrong.

The fact that Government-controlled institutions and compliant legacy media outfits would be made exempt from these laws is telling and a big concern. This appears to have little to do with safety and everything to do with Government being able to control narratives. As we saw during the lamentable - and wrongful - Covid lockdown period, the legacy media is all too willing to publish anything to help the Government push their message, whether the information is correct or not.

The Bill's censorship also unjustly protects banks and bankers, thus eroding public trust and bringing the law into disrepute. If banks are profiting from bad practice - people should be able to say so. If the people are wrong in their criticism, then open discourse again will bear this out.

I'm old enough to remember former PM Julia Gillard declaring she would "throw open the curtains and let the sunshine in", before heading down the path of a 'Ministry of Truth' for some time before the terrible idea was shelved. So there seems to have been a desire for something like this bill to be implemented for some time now.

It is my opinion that the passing of this bill will be a black mark on all who vote in favour of it, and will set our country on a course towards a very dark future. I urge you to vote against it and fight to preserve freedom and liberty in our Nation.

Yours,



### Sample 31

To the Committee Secretary,

I'm writing this submission in-relation to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 to which I am vehemently opposed.

As a parent of two young adults who have grown up during this pernicious culture of "cancel", I have made it my mission to impress upon them the importance of always having the courage to not only voice their *own* opinions but respect the fact that others might differ in theirs. And to use their judgement, intuition and powers of critical thought to discern what they understand is truth, from fiction, regardless of the source of information.

The freedom for us all to voice an opinion or an understanding of truth without fear of harsh reprisal is now under serious threat. This proposed Bill, if adopted, will completely undermine everything that a true democracy holds in the very highest regard: the freedom to speech and thought.

How dare a government propose that they be the sole arbiter of truth!! How dare it suggest that it will censor the voices of its citizens!! Only a government of tyranny would propose such a Bill. We've seen many examples since 2020 where what was peddled by government bureaucrats as "truth" was later proven to be exactly false! "Truths" that caused an incredible amount of hardship and division in our society, and ultimately, a grave distrust in the very services a government is expected to provide.

Australia is no longer the home I knew and loved. If this Bill passes, our beloved country and so much of what we had to be proud of, will be forever lost.

I implore you to do the right thing for us, and every generation to come. Please ensure that this Bill does not pass!

Sincerely

### Sample 32

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the aforementioned legislation, which I believe amounts to an unconstitutional government overreach into the rights of all Australians to freely express their ideas and opinions, regardless of whether or not we (or you) agree with them.

I do not believe that the government should be the arbiter of truth and, furthermore, that it has no right to adopt such a position. Nor does it have the right to relieve itself of the responsibilities it attributes to its citizens with respect to factuality of communications.

I strongly believe that hearings into the bill are required and that the enquiry should be extended accordingly to allow sufficient time for genuine public debate. Due to the extreme risks involved with legislation pertaining to freedom of speech and expression, nothing short of a referendum would be required to legitimately address these matters.

Along with a great many of my fellow Australians, I oppose this bill utterly and take this opportunity to remind you that the only solution to "misinformation" and "disinformation" is more discussion, not less. Censorship has never been on the right side of history, and I urge you to reconsider your legacy.

Regards,

### **Sample 33**

Dear Senate,  
Please stand up for the democratic rights of Australians and oppose the Disinformation Bill. Please remove my name when you publish this.

My main arguments are:

We are a democracy that believes freedom of speech is a human right.

Being wrong in the moment should not cause impediments to freedom of speech.

People have a right to air their own opinions on contentious topics.

The Government has proven to be wrong on big issues, and must correct in retrospect. This bill would limit the ability for people to even have a chance of giving the government alternative perspectives, or building a case against information presented as fact, that turns out to be anything but.

The MisInformation Bill undermines social media by economically incentivizing censorship and improperly retaliating against X Corp, among few companies taking a principled stand.

The MisInformation Bill is a serious risk to democracy because it empowers ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner to censor the internet, threatening our fundamental right to hold truth to power. The MisInformation Bill risks free speech by empowering ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner to censor content, despite the Human Rights Commission's concern over defining truth and falsehood.

The Misinformation Bill makes the Government an arbiter of truth by allowing it to impose a single narrative, as seen in authoritarian countries, despite governments frequently being wrong. It is incredibly disheartening to see this being considered, let alone legislated.

The MisInformation Bill favors BigTech by imposing enormous fines that small startups cannot afford, driving innovation away and deterring tech companies from operating in Australia. The Bill's censorship risks creating a healthcare dictatorship, harming public health through myopic orthodoxy.

People have a right to be wrong, and to express themselves as such. That is the price paid for freedom of speech.

The powers this bill enables are horrendous in the wrong hands, regardless of ideology.

This Disinformation Bill is an affront to Australian democracy. I ask the Senate reject this in the strongest terms.

With best wishes,

### Sample 34

Dear Sir/Madam,

This Mis/DisInformation Bill is reprehensible, and those who put it forward are not working for the common good of the populace. This bill is leading into dictatorship. There has never been, and never will be, one person or group who can know the whole truth. The scientific method works based on the fact that there are and always will be unknowns and that the current position on anything cannot be presumed to be the final answer with full certainty of the whole truth on any matter. It is the aim of the good scientist to falsify their theories, not to attack and shut down anyone who may have another opinion and can prove them wrong. This is not how we reach the truth. As such no one should ever be given a position to dictate what is allowed to be said on a matter.

It is only through freedom of speech that we may gain further perspective and in doing so we must respect the freedom to discern and that the minds, sight and experiences of the many will hold it in various perspectives that combined will contain many valid considerations. As soon as one minority dictates what can and can't be said, the truth is shackled by opinion, greed and the lust for power. This tempts great corruption and cannot be permitted. It is the Senate's responsibility not to approve it.

The fact is that people will lie in order to feather their own nest. In every election, those vying for power promise things for which they inevitably do not deliver. Why should the government or any one body or group be given the power to be arbiters of the truth? It is far better that people are given a wide range of perspectives, and grow in their discernment through the process of debate and consideration. This is one of the founding aspects of modern civilization.

The existing laws already adequately cover the critical situations for which misleading perspective is harmful. We should not tip the balance towards dictatorships. We must instead be willing to wear the freedom of others speaking their perspective, even when we disagree. A key aspect for learning and growth is to have a measuring stick of a hypothesis, which we accept could be wrong, and is the starting point on our journey towards truth. From there we learn how to enquire and keep open minds, rather than closing ourselves off to limited possibilities.

Truly great minds know that they only know a small part of what is available to know. We must step forward in a world of uncertainty as best we can. Progress is diminished when people fear to speak, to ask questions, or to point out a critique or state why they disagree. I say again, this bill is reprehensible, and a slap in the face to the thousands of veterans who fought to keep Australia free. Do not approve this Bill. Your own liberties are at stake.

Kind regards,

### **Sample 35**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide a response to the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications concerning the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. I ask that my submission be made public with my full name included.

I am writing this submission as a concerned citizen and regular user of social media.

My points of contention I have with the bill is that:

1. Free speech is likely to be seriously curtailed by censorship.
2. The Bill will make the Government the arbiter of what is true and false, as it can enforce laws while not being subject to them.

Free Speech is fundamental to human rights, freedom and political discourse.

Why should the government be the arbiter of mis- and disinformation and of what we see, hear and think.

A liberal democracy such as in Australia does highly value freedom of speech. The government's proposed mis and disinformation laws are a big threat to this freedom.

Under these laws even the truth will be no defence as the governments or it's agencies as arbiters of truth could label anything as misleading or deceptive.

As a concerned Australian I believe that any citizen, myself included can now be targeted by the government or an unelected and unaccountable bureaucracy for prosecution for simply stating genuinely held opinions online.

While misinformation is a genuine concern the open exchange of ideas- even those that may be controversial or unpopular- is fundamental to a vibrant democracy. Digital platforms provide a forum for individuals to express a wide range of opinions.

If we fail to ensure robust safeguards for freedom of expression online, then the measures taken to combat mis and disinformation could themselves risk undermining Australia's democracy and freedoms.

Finally, I am also demanding the government conduct public hearings into the bill.

Yours sincerely

### Sample 36

Dear Senate,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed Mis/Dis/Information Bill, as I believe it represents a serious threat to the democratic freedoms of Australians. I also request that this submission be made public, with my full name included.

First and foremost, this Bill positions the Government as the sole arbiter of truth by exempting itself from its own provisions. This approach dangerously mirrors authoritarian practices, allowing the Government to control the narrative without challenge, undermining the open debate that is the foundation of a healthy democracy. The Government should not be above the laws it seeks to impose on others.

Perhaps most concerning is the threat this Bill poses to free speech. It grants sweeping powers to ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner to regulate and censor online content, effectively allowing the Government to silence political opinions and dissent under the guise of curbing misinformation. This is a serious infringement on Australians' right to free expression, and it sets a dangerous precedent for future restrictions on political discourse.

Given the serious implications of this Bill, I strongly urge the Senate to hold a public hearing. It is disgraceful that such a significant piece of legislation is being rushed through with minimal public consultation. The Australian people deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns, and the Senate has a responsibility to ensure that such far-reaching laws are subject to thorough scrutiny before any decisions are made.

I trust that you will take these concerns into account and reject the Bill in its current form to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all Australians.

Regards,

### Sample 37

Dear Senate,

I am writing to express my concerns and disappointment regarding the proposed Misinformation and Disinformation Bill. In particular, I am concerned about the following issues:

1. Government as Arbiter of Truth: The Bill exempts the government from its provisions, effectively positioning it as the ultimate arbiter of truth. Unfortunately, truth is often elusive, nebulous, and multidimensional. This exemption is particularly troubling given governments' track record of promoting specific viewpoints or political ideologies, depending upon the party in power. Governments can also disseminate inaccuracies, whether intentionally or in error. This exemption may place too much power in the executive arm of government, potentially eroding a fundamental democratic right in Australia which is historically a free and open society.

2. Threat to Free Speech: By empowering the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the eSafety Commissioner to censor the internet, the Bill poses a significant risk to free speech. There is a danger that political or unpopular views could be unjustly labeled as misinformation. It is reasonable to argue that the Bill may lead to excessive censorship and the suppression of legitimate and important discourse in Australia, which is essential if our society is to continue valuing free speech and the pursuit of truth. Many viewpoints that were once historically unpopular have proven to be true over time, such as Galileo's heliocentric theory, which challenged the prevailing geocentric model (for want of a better example). Governments should not without clear and very narrow powers purport to define what is truth, as it an exercise that may be beyond their expertise, ability, resources and or mandate. If government is given broad powers to define truth, the right to free speech will also become the exception as opposed to the general rule.

In conclusion, I urge the Senate to reconsider the provisions of this Bill to ensure that it does not undermine the fundamental democratic principles of free speech, transparency and accountability.

Thank you for considering my submission.

### **Sample 38**

Don't take away our free speech. If this Bill goes through that's what will happen. I'm against this Bill because of the following.

Social media companies have been happily censoring and banning those who criticise left-wing ideologies for years. It's an ominous sign that the Albanese Government demands still more censorship and wants to give itself powers to enforce it.

The inevitable result of the Labor Government threatening massive fines against social media if they don't censor content further is that those companies will block content and debates, they know left-wing governments don't like. Albanese's Government has cunningly drafted its legislation to ensure that when your posts are censored or your account is banned because of his laws, there will be no right of appeal to the government, and they'll be able to blame the social media platforms.

Everybody knows that the internet is full of false information. A good government should trust the public they work for to process and critique what they read and see online accordingly. The best remedy to misinformation is free and open debate, supported by a fair media which doesn't simply regurgitate the fashionable opinions of the day from social media because it's cheap and easy journalism.

Instead of that liberal and democratic approach, the Albanese Government is choosing the path of censorship and suppression. Government which appoints itself and fellow elites as the arbiters of truth is the worst possible response – one which authoritarian regimes have chosen since the beginning of recorded history.

### **Sample 39**

To whom it may concern,

Re: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

List of concerns:

I must insist that the government extend the submissions period for longer than one week as this time frame is unacceptable.

Why should the government be given the power to influence how a private company is to do business?

Who has the right to be the arbiter of truth – certainly not the government as they are open to abuse this trust.

The government should not be given the right to exempt itself, the media and education institutions at all.

People should be given the right tools to discern for themselves what to believe.

The meanings are too broad and can be easily misinterpreted. For example who gets to decide what serious harm means and in what context?

Why is this matter not being put to a referendum so the public can decide if the government should even have this bill at all?

In conclusion, this bill must be removed and must not be allowed to continue.

There is no reason for this bill to become law as it only caters to and protects certain interests and does not help the people. It only seeks to curtail our rights.

#### **Sample 40**

To the,

Committee Secretary Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications,

I strongly reject and oppose The Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill.

We are born with inalienable rights established by God and therefore cannot be removed or abolished. Free speech and to speak freely is an inalienable right.

It is not the role of the Australian Government or paid bureaucrats to be the arbiter of what the "truth" is.

There must be public hearings on this Bill. The inquiry should be extended in order for the Government to fulfil its obligations to the citizens of this country.

I say NO to silencing the voices of Australians.

#### **Sample 41**

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to express my objection to the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment, and to request that it be rejected by the Senate and not be passed into law.

It is not the Government's place to act as an arbiter of truth or an enforcer of consensus, and the misinformation bill would have a chilling effect on voices dissenting from the mainstream, attempting to bring real change and to bring vigorous debate about the path forward. Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants, and the best way to combat misinformation is to bring it to the light and show everyone its folly, not to empower the State to crush those who would sway from whatever narrow band of discourse it has decided is permissible.

Ultimately, this Bill would have the opposite of the intended effect, driving dissenting opinions underground and allowing them to metastasise as they languish unexamined and reinforcing people's growing lack of faith in Government institutions.

It is only through transparency and open, uncensored communication that we can grow as a society and move forward together.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns, and I once again urge you to reject this bill and prevent us from taking a further step along the path towards Government control of speech and the society riven by division and distrust it will create.

Sincerely

#### **Sample 42**

I oppose all attempts to regulate, suppress, manage or dilute an Australian citizen's right to free expression.

The Government and its agencies are not fair arbiters of the truth and never have been. In my lifetime I have heard lies from my Government about all manner of things, starting with the Vietnam war and on to the present day.

This bill is unAustralian and contrary to the wishes of the majority of the Australian population, were they to be fully informed on these matters.

I note the disingenuous nature of this process whereby you have given a very brief period for people to respond, obviously hoping to deter any criticisms or debate.

Please take note of my strong opposition to this proposal and the creeping authoritarian thinking within my Government which brought it about.

### **Sample 43**

I am deeply concerned that this legislation is an enormous overreach of government authority. I believe that for any one body or organisation to be the absolute arbiters of what is or is not the truth is an absolute recipe for a dictatorship somewhere in the future. The truth is absolutely subjective to human beings depending on biases, religious and moral beliefs or absence thereof, political persuasions and potential group ideology. Humankind has been capable of deciding right from wrong for thousands of years but whenever governments become involved in such matters it has rarely ended well. It is my belief that this legislation is heavy handed and does not trust the depth of character of the Australian citizens to make informed and moral decisions. I submit that this legislation should be dropped immediately as it will in the long run silence honest independent opinions from open discussions and that is never a good thing for an open and honest democracy.

Kind regards

### **Sample 44**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing this submission in relation to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024.

I oppose the implementation of the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. Freedom of speech is a vital part of democracy and if this bill goes ahead this crucial aspect of democracy will be a thing of the past. The proposed bill is a blatant authoritarian and controlling power grab by the government. This bill would give a small group of unelected individuals the right to be arbiters of what they perceive to be the truth and denying 25 million Australians the right to have their say on what they perceive to be the truth. This bill is completely undemocratic.

Regards,

### **Sample 45**

To the Committee,

I would like to express my grave concern of the above proposed bill. I am afraid this law would give the government the power to suppress alternative viewpoints. It is essentially a suppression of free speech which is an integral part of our democracy. We are relying on government to be the arbiters of truth which could lead to a totalitarian government. This is not the Australia I want to live in.

Please seriously consider rejecting such a bill.

Sincerely

### **Sample 46**

Hello,

I would like to Express my opposition to the bill and anything that censors free speech.

I Demand public hearings into the bill—with such a short inquiry, the government likely isn't planning on public hearings, so the public must demand them, and if that requires extending the inquiry, so much better.

Stop restricting free speech. I will not vote for your party ever if this bill goes through.

### **Sample 47**

I am opposed to this bill. The government is pushing it through with any public hearing.

I demand that there is a public hearing into this bill that will greeting impact the freedom of speech in this country.



### **Sample 48**

Hello

I am writing today to express my objection to the 'Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2024' and, anything that censors free speech.

I also demand public hearings into the bill and if that requires extending the inquiry, so much better.

*Kind Regards*

### **Sample 49**

I hereby demand that a public hearing be held into the Communications/Misinformation and Disinformation bill.

This Communications/ Misinformation and Disinformation bill is not an approved election promise and should be stopped immediately.

This Misinformation and Disinformation bill removes my democratic right to freedom of speech which is a democratic right.

Who determines TRUTH in Misinformation and Disinformation when there are substantial times the government got this wrong in the past.

### **Sample 50**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2024. This bill threatens to severely restrict free speech by granting the government authority to define "truth" and potentially silence alternative voices.

Given the far-reaching implications, I strongly urge the Senate Committee to hold public hearings to ensure that citizens have the opportunity to voice their concerns before the submission deadline on 30 September 2024.

### **Sample 51**

Hi,

The bill proposes to amend the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and would make consequential amendments to other Acts to establish a new framework to safeguard against serious harms caused by misinformation or disinformation.

In its current form will impend free speech and shows the current gov. is no longer in touch with the Australian community or how a democracy operates.

I cannot see how any Australian citizen will vote for members in the future that vote for this bill. It also has the potential to cause mass civil unrest on its own.

This type of law demands a public hearing and more public scrutinisation. Such a bill that will affect all Australian citizens and businesses cannot and should not be put before the gov. unless it for the people.

Thanks,

## Sample 52

Dear Committee

### **My Submission pertaining to proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024**

I strenuously disagree with and oppose this proposed Bill.

This is authoritarian censorship in its most vile form.

Censorship has no place in Australia, where we should all have the democratic right to express opinions and debate.

Who gets to define what is “mis” and “dis” information and what is harmful? Certainly I do not trust any Government to decide that.

No Government should be empowered to shut down the mass-dissemination of ideas and information that is possible now due to modern technology and social media.

Free and open discussion must always be allowed.

**I also demand that there be public hearings into the Bill. This proposed Orwellian legislation must be open to extended public discussion and debate.**

To quote from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19:

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”*

Yours faithfully,

## Sample 53

To whom it may concern,

I totally oppose the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. Not only does this censor free speech but it opens the way to subjective judgement. Laws targeting misinformation and disinformation require clear and precise definitions and this bill does not do that.

Each person should be free to make their own judgement about which information they regard as correct without interference from authorities. Recent history has shown that misinformation can come from many sources including those organisations that are exempted in this bill.

I demand public hearings into the bill. The concerns expressed by the public relate to children and not to adults. It is dishonest to use that concern as an excuse to censor free-thinking adults.

Regards

### Sample 54

To the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications,

I , citizen of Australia, Oppose this bill

I express strong opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024, because the bill will censor the freedom of speech for all Australians. Australians should be able to criticise the economy, the government, banking system, financial markets. We need to be free to have open and robust debate.

#### **Demand public hearings into the bill and not rush through with only 7 days to express concerns**

I demand a public hearing into the amendments of the bill. Only allowing 7 days for the public to express their concerns is outrageous.

#### **Attack on Australian Democracy**

This legislation is an attack on Australian Democracy where the system of government should be governed by the people and for the people. Not for government to dictate what people should think and say.

Stop the influence from the Biden administration and European Union to influence Australians right to free speech. Listen to the people.

#### **Attack on Independent Media**

This legislation is an attack on independent media, independent thought.

We can do better as Australians.

Best regards,

### Sample 55

To Whom It May Concern

With this email I am opposing the proposed Amendment of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024!

After reading carefully through the documents provided on the parliament website, there is insufficient clarification of the definition of misinformation and disinformation. These matters must be clarified in public hearings to provide a consulted view of the public to ensure all participants in search for information understand the rules applied.

Please stop the Bill and organise public hearings to allow the public to actively participate and understand the proposed amendments.

With Kind Regards,

### Sample 56

To Whom It May Concern.

I hereby wish to declare my opposition to the passing of the bill, Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024.

I regard this bill as an attempt to place control over free speech in our country, our democracy and our way of life.

Every person has a right to express their views and thoughts without the threat of control and coercion from their government(s).

Who determines what is the truth? It has always been in the eye of the beholder and every viewpoint can be viewed as that person's truth. The government has no jurisdiction over what is the truth and what is not. If the government fears people's opinion then it can, like the rest of us, give an alternative opinion. It has no right to place control over the population of this country because it does not agree.

I ask that public hearings be instigated to air this bill and give the populace the opportunity to express their views.

The fact that only 7 days have been given for submissions is a travesty of free speech and shows, again, that this government is only interested in control and not freedom for its people.

### Sample 57

I find it appalling that the government is trying to push this in ONE week!! You obviously want this done, which is not normal to assess this matter in a too short time frame!

This is very fundamental to human rights, and only one week??

No minister or bureaucrat (you are NOT GOD) should have the only right to control what citizens say!

Citizens have the right to criticize the economy, the government and the banking system via alternate media. This has been a debate for centuries!

Governing should not be replaced by Absolutism!

Govern for the people, not for yourselves, trying to exercise power! If governments can deliver FOR the public, they are losing the battle, which should not be one in the first place. Change your policies. No right to shut down social media.

In 1948, United Nations General Assembly, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 19 of that Declaration says:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers."

This should stand. It's the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This Bill should not pass.

As this is a senate enquiry, there should be public hearings as well.

### **Sample 58**

To whom it may concern

I submit this to register my objection to the Misinformation and Disinformation legislation Bill 2024 as proposed by the Albanese Government.

In my opinion this bill contravenes Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Australians have a right under the constitution to free speech. If this bill is passed, who will decide the status of any words written or spoken anywhere? What is to prevent the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation by either the government or those exempted from the legislation, all who have a record of doing just that!

There should be adequate time allowed for both submissions and public hearings regarding this bill and its potential effect on basic human rights in Australia.

### **Sample 59**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. This legislation poses a serious threat to free speech and public discourse in Australia.

I do not support this bill as it enables the government to define what constitutes "misinformation" and "harm," leading to potential censorship of dissenting views and a chilling effect on open discussion.

I demand public hearings into the bill. Given the rushed nature of this inquiry, it is crucial that the public has a chance to engage and provide meaningful input.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 60**

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. This bill poses a serious threat to free speech in Australia and should be rejected.

As a migrant, I am thankful and proud to call Australia home. I highly value the democratic society in which we live. Free speech is vital to democracy, yet this legislation empowers the government to define and regulate "misinformation" and "disinformation," terms that are subjective and can be manipulated. Even with amendments, the bill sets a dangerous precedent for government overreach, potentially silencing critical voices and leaning heavily toward censorship.

This bill serves to silence the Australian people and undermine our democracy, while disproportionately granting control over speech to the government and major media organisations. The bill's double standard, allowing exemptions for state and media entities, erodes public trust and calls into question the integrity of efforts to combat misinformation.

I urge the Committee to hold public hearings to allow for comprehensive consultation and scrutiny of this significant change to public discourse.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the rejection of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. Protecting free speech is essential for our democracy. Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully

## Sample 61

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my rejection of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024.

I see that the bill proposes to amend the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* and would make consequential amendments to other Acts to establish a new framework to safeguard against serious harms caused by misinformation or disinformation.

As an Australian citizen with a 20-year work history in health care, I have significant concerns about the intention of the bill, the language used and its potential to curb free speech in this country.

- This Bill would lead to the government defining what the truth is and give power to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and online platforms to enforce it.
- This bill would result in the government being the ultimate authority of truth, and anyone who disagrees with that 'truth' would be censored and / or punished.
- The rules would not apply to the government and mainstream media, even if they share or promote information that is not correct – which is often the case, especially the media.
- It would also lead to digital companies self-censoring the valid views of Australians to avoid the risk of huge fines.
- The definitions of disinformation, misinformation and 'serious harm' are not clear and open to interpretation.
- It is not clear who determines what information is false or misleading, and how independent this process will be.
- It would mean what information I receive and how I receive it, is to be controlled paternalistically.

In a democracy and a free country, people must be able to receive information from a range of sources and draw their own conclusions. People need to be supported to develop critical thinking skills about the information that is available – they can consider the source of the information, if the source is credible, what other support or debate there is etc.

We need firm, robust debate and I do not support a Bill that will allow my information sources to be curated based on what the government wants me to know or not know.

As a health professional, I have seen this type of censorship firsthand – clinicians used their professional judgement, research, and critical thinking skills to support clients in an individualised way, but if their management or advice didn't align with the government mantra at the time, these clinicians were censored and/or expelled from their organisations – despite a wealth of information to support their treatment plan.

Even accurate information could be deemed misleading if it "lacks context", giving government-appointed officials and 'fact-checkers' considerable power to decide what is true or false. There are numerous examples of this occurring in relation to recent global events including information about vaccine safety and vaccine-related injuries that were censored by social media platforms and government agencies.

Additionally, the law would enable the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to implement enforceable industry codes, placing unelected officials in a position to restrict online discussions. This is not only an infringement on free speech; it is an assault on democracy itself.

The proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 legislation is also in breach of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The Albanese government was forced to ditch a previous draft version of the laws after they were widely condemned by many media organisations, tech companies, civil liberties groups and even the Australian Human Rights Commission. The new version is no better.

The Misinformation Bill must not be supported in any way. Not even with amendments.

I am vehemently opposed to this Bill being pushed through without transparent consultation and demand Public Hearings to be conducted on this proposed legislation.

I trust that the Committee will also oppose this Bill.

Yours Sincerely,

### **Sample 62**

To Whom it may concern,

The definitions of misinformation and disinformation (i.e., content that is reasonably verifiable as false, misleading, or deceptive and likely to cause serious harm) are broad and subjective.

What constitutes serious harm or misleading may be interpreted differently, leading to concerns about overly restrictive content moderation.

The Bill could lead to the suppression of conservative, religious or minority viewpoints on a range of different issues - including, for example, the gospel, abortion, gender ideology, euthanasia, the family, child protection, immigration, the economy, health, environmental conservation – on the grounds that these are harmful.

Australian law is already deficient in terms of protections for freedom of expression.

This freedom – a right recognised in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Australia is signatory – is increasingly eroded by domestic anti-discrimination and anti-vilification legislation.

This Bill would continue that trend by extending the scope of prohibited speech to include the expression of opinions or beliefs that are regarded as harmful, according to subjective, vaguely defined terms. It exacerbates something that is already a problem. We need laws that protect speech, not laws that further constrain free speech.

The potential for civil penalties against digital platforms might incentivise them to take overly cautious stances, leading to the removal of lawful content that could be contentious but not harmful. This could disproportionately affect political, social, or minority viewpoints, stifling public discourse.

Trust in our government depends upon absolute transparency. Without transparency, the public cannot hold the government to account, expose corruption or the abuse of power. By reducing transparency, this Bill will, inevitably, reduce the trust of the Australian people in our government and our democratic institutions.

The result is not a safer Australia.

In threatening our democracy, this Bill threatens the peace, prosperity, and freedom of all Australians. This law would give the government power to suppress viewpoints that conflict with their favoured narratives.

It is open to abuse, which would be difficult to detect, let alone correct.

This is why censorship powers are the hallmark of authoritarian dictatorships, not democracies. Where the government should move to prevent a recurrence of such abuse, this Bill would regularise

government overreach, it also grants substantial powers to ACMA to enforce regulations, approve industry codes, and demand information from platforms.

The ability of the government to access information about what private citizens think, and particularly to identify those harbouring “harmful” or dangerous opinions, is more powerful than any democratic government should seek.

The power of Big Tech to influence information systems and, thus the opinions and behaviours at a population level, is well established.

This Bill would regularise and incentivise behaviours that have the potential to influence election outcomes and therefore the direction of Australia as a nation.

No such powers should ever be outsourced to foreign-owned entities.

Therefore, I urge the Senate to abandon the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 in order to protect freedom of expression, prevent government overreach, and maintain trust in our democratic institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

### **Sample 63**

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to hear that there is a possibility of an extension to submit my objection to the proposed Misinformation and Disinformation bill.

In good faith I hereby submit my objection to the proposed MaD bill.

I do not believe such a bill has any place in Australia. Freedom of speech is the foundation of a democratic society. The basis of good research requires all the information from both sides of the argument to either reach a conclusion or create a path for further research.

Critical thinking is a skill that should be fostered and encouraged, so that we, as a country and its people, can nurture some of the great thinkers and creators of our time into being. We could be heading into a golden age for all; however the proposition of this bill could send us all into a dark and repressive age.

A bill that exempts the government and the media while also deciding what is mis or dis information, sets itself up to be tyrannical in nature.

While there may be pressure from other global entities to enact such a bill, it is time for our members of parliament to stand up and say no and reject the proposed MaD bill in full. It's the only decent thing to do. Our future depends on it.

Regards

### **Sample 64**

Dear Committee Secretary,

My name is Steve Case and I am writing in regards to the proposed MAD Bill.

I realise I have missed the deadline for submissions having been in the NT and out of the loop for several months however I would appreciate my below concerns being added to the assessment process.

It is my belief that This Bill, in its current form, threatens the core of what it means to be Australian—our ability to speak freely, question authority, and share ideas without fear of government censorship.

By giving vague and unchecked power to authorities, this bill could suppress the voices of ordinary citizens, leaving us vulnerable to a future where speaking out comes at a cost.

Freedom of speech is not just a right—it's the beating heart of democracy. Without it, we risk losing the very foundation of what makes Australia a country where people are free to think, debate, and



engage in civic life. This Bill threatens the future of our children and grandchildren, who may inherit a society where questioning the status quo is no longer allowed.

This is more than just protecting free speech for today—it's about ensuring that future generations inherit a country where their voices matter, where their thoughts and ideas are valued, and where the government serves the people, not controls them.

The freedom to speak, to question, and to be heard must be safeguarded—not eroded.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns on this matter.

### **Sample 65**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

I am a , an with my own business . I live on 40 acres of bush in the and have a lovely life. I have never been on a protest or been particularly political (until recently). I want my sons (architect and scientist) to enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities I had.

Sadly this lucky country is not no lucky anymore and the next generation will be poorer, will never be able to own a property and will scrape by as salaries do not keep pace with increased cost of living and taxes. This situation is engineered to make the rich richer and the poor poorer and the mainstream media is controlled by the monopolies.

Crucial to a democracy and citizens having agency over their own lives is freedom of speech and access to alternative narratives. Generally people are intelligent enough to know what is a scam, a conspiracy theory, incitement, exaggeration, propaganda, misinformation or skewed by a logarithm. I am happy to watch ABC knowing that it has a left wing bias. I do not get offended by an alternative narrative. I would feel my freedom is impinged by government control of social media, enforcing censorship by draconian fines. And freedom is the most important attribute of my life.

### **Sample 66**

I am writing to express my profound opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. This bill constitutes a direct attack on the fundamental right to free speech in Australia and must be rejected entirely.

Free speech is a cornerstone of democracy, protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Australia has been a signatory since 1948.

This proposed legislation, however, would severely restrict that right by empowering the government to define and police what constitutes "misinformation" or "disinformation," terms which are inherently subjective and prone to manipulation.

Furthermore, I want to make it perfectly clear that this bill should not be passed in any form. Even with amendments, the legislation poses a dangerous precedent for future government overreach, potentially silencing voices critical of the state or other dominant entities. The balance between protecting the public from harmful information and safeguarding free speech is delicate, but this bill overwhelmingly tips the scales towards censorship and suppression.

Moreover, I believe that any legislator who votes in favour of this bill is acting in a manner that is tantamount to treason.

Supporting legislation that suppresses public discourse serves the interests of foreign powers seeking to undermine our democracy, rather than the Australian people. The bill, in its current state, facilitates this threat by handing disproportionate control over speech to the government and large media entities.

The most egregious aspect of this legislation is the double standard it sets by allowing exemptions for state and media entities. This is a blatant case of "one rule for me, and another for thee," which undermines public trust in both government and media institutions. If misinformation and disinformation are to be truly combated, it must be done transparently and applied equally to all parties, rather than selectively enforced.

Additionally, I strongly urge the Committee to hold public hearings on this matter, allowing the broader community to become more aware of the gross negligence displayed by the government in attempting to push this legislation through. The public deserves more time to understand the serious implications of this bill and to voice their concerns. Such a sweeping change to the framework of public discourse cannot be rushed through without comprehensive consultation and scrutiny.

For all these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 in its entirety.

Our democracy depends on the protection of free speech, and this bill represents a dangerous step away from that core value.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Regards,

### **Sample 67**

I am writing a brief letter about the importance and significance of freedom of expression and freedom to speak up, under the institution of law and democracy and liberty of our country.

I believe that there's been several cases already whereby the right to true autonomy and democracy has been undermined by a selective few, who choose red tape thinking that is a type of control over people's rights and lives and fundamental freedoms in this case, freedom to express or choose what to believe, or say, or just the so called right way, I ask this question? who has the power to decide whether you are perfectly true in your opinion, views and beliefs, ? And can determine by force and punishment, what we can and cannot say, or even can't do, The very people who have already now gone so far as to curtail the rights including medical rights now want us to believe that they were justified?

It's the very first thing that we are given in life, the freedom of expression, the right of speech and the understanding that we have to hold our own freedom and identity and this freedom should not be restricted by a select group of people who think that they have ultimate truth, ultimate power and rights over another person's freedom to express themselves freely without being red flagged by an authoritarian state controlled media or any other means to silence the majority so that a few can dictate what someone should or shouldn't say, do or ask questions about, and fines for making content controlled a thing that this country should avoid, because it has the hallmarks of authoritarian rule, which breaks down democracy, and we need more than ever before a fight for freedom and democracy and true equality, & I ask one question is the expressing of someone's opinion or their feelings about a concern about a matter, or view point, the thing which will drive our attention away or will we make it more about the way in which we think as a democracy, with liberty and grace on our shoulders as a nation that is in dire straits without the freedom to be, express and exercise our rights to hope for a better future for our children and our country.

I believe it's high times we have need of a reality check,

That democracy is a better option in this country than a form of communism that breaks the very foundations of democracy, it's high time we let people be,

Kindest regards

### Sample 68

To whom it may concern

I would like to express my concern on the disinformation/ misinformation bill.

In this current era that we live in we have a lot of information at our finger tips , some may be real and some may not. But under a democracy that is my choice to agree or disagree with the information.

I feel like this bill is to give a certain few the right to spread there information that we will not be able to question, this is Communism in my opinion and I totally disagree with that under a democracy and our constitution that we live by.

I have a severe problem with who is exempt from this bill, in my opinion the ones exempt have been the biggest culprits in spreading misinformation.

I feel there is a narrative that the government and media are trying to push and this is one of the steps for them to move fwd to control the Aussie population.

I like living in a democracy as I have the power to question the highest of ranks in our country and keep them honest as we can.

I also don't like the idea of a one world government and I disagree with our country giving up our sovereignty to the WHO who I think are a corrupt bunch of billionaires who are playing chess with country's and humans to satisfy there greed and corruption.

In conclusion

I totally disagree with your disinformation /misinformation bill. It must not go through I'm writing on behalf of my young family

Cheers

### Sample 69

Dear Senate,

I'm writing to express my absolute opposition to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. This Bill is a direct threat to free speech and democracy in Australia, and it must be stopped.

This Bill hands the Government unchecked power to control the narrative – reminiscent of authoritarian regimes. Governments are far from infallible, and allowing them to dictate “truth” will lead to dangerous consequences. History has shown how often governments get it wrong.

Here's what should worry you the most:

- The Bill enables rampant censorship, turning social media and government authorities into gatekeepers of information. Dissenting voices can be silenced, and political debate suffocated.
- It empowers ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner with sweeping censorship capabilities, curtailing genuine dialogue and differing opinions. This is an assault on the very foundation of democracy.
- By silencing differing views on critical issues like healthcare, this Bill opens the door to a healthcare dictatorship, where only the government's narrative on the pandemic is allowed. This is not the Australia we know.
- The Bill incentivizes BigTech to censor users, while small Australian tech companies are crushed under the weight of compliance burdens. It creates an uneven playing field, driving innovation out of our country.

- The censorship the Bill enforces does nothing but erode public trust, especially in sectors like banking, where transparency is key. It won't protect Australians – it will destroy faith in our institutions.
- It's also downright insulting that corporations are exempt from this Bill. While the Australian public faces the heavy hand of censorship, companies are given a free pass. This hypocrisy shows where the government's loyalties truly lie – with big business, not the people.

It's time to take a stand. This Bill is an overreach, and it's a danger to everything we stand for as a democracy. We need leaders who will fight for our rights, not chip away at them.

I urge you to reject the Misinformation Bill and protect our right to free speech.

Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 70**

Trust in our government depends upon absolute transparency. Without transparency, the public cannot hold the government to account, expose corruption or the abuse of power.

By reducing transparency, this Bill will, inevitably, reduce the trust of the Australian people in our government and our democratic institutions. The result is not a safer Australia. In threatening our democracy, this Bill threatens the peace, prosperity, and freedom of all Australians.

This law would give the government power to suppress viewpoints that conflict with their favoured narratives. It is open to abuse, which would be difficult to detect, let alone correct. This is why censorship powers are the hallmark of authoritarian dictatorships, not democracies.

Where the government should move to prevent a recurrence of such abuse, this Bill would regularise government overreach. The Bill grants substantial powers to ACMA to enforce regulations, approve industry codes, and demand information from platforms. The ability of the government to access information about what private citizens think, and particularly to identify those harbouring "harmful" or dangerous opinions, is more power than any democratic government should seek.

I urge the Senate to abandon the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 in the interest of safeguarding democracy and the rights of Australian citizens.

### **Sample 71**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my grave concerns about the Disinformation Bill, which I believe is a potential threat to democracy.

Please do not include my name when you publish this.

Here are some of the concerns I would like you to consider:

The Misinformation Bill risks free speech because drawing clear lines between truth and falsehood is complex, potentially leading to censorship of legitimate political views.

The Bill's censorship undermines public health by potentially allowing only the government's view on pandemics, risking a healthcare dictatorship and bringing the law into disrepute. We have seen serious breaches of people's basic human rights being violated during COVID. This must never happen again ever!

The Misinformation Bill makes the Government an arbiter of truth without being subject to the laws, despite governments frequently being wrong.

We must oppose the Disinformation Bill as Government must never be allowed to control what information the people of Australia can get access to, say or read.

## Sample 72

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ —a wife, mum, and a \_\_\_\_\_ professional (\_\_\_\_\_). Both in my personal life and career, I've always believed in being open, honest, and making informed choices. I feel strongly that people should be able to decide what is right for them without unnecessary interference. That is why I am writing to express my concerns about the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 (MAD Bill).

To me, it risks taking away some of our core freedoms around speech and independent thought, which are so important in a country like Australia.

### Key Concerns About the MAD Bill

#### Risk to Free Speech and Honest Conversations

This bill's definitions of "misinformation" and "disinformation" are so broad that it could silence people who are just sharing a different perspective, especially on tricky topics like health. Even if what someone says doesn't match up with the mainstream, they shouldn't face censorship. Free speech allows us to challenge the status quo, and if we lose that, we lose the ability to truly think for ourselves.

**Solution:** Instead of censorship, the government should help promote media literacy—teaching people how to figure out what's real and what's not on their own. Open conversations and debate are essential for democracy, and this bill threatens that.

#### Vague Definitions of "Misinformation" and "Disinformation"

The terms "misinformation" and "disinformation" in the bill are not clearly defined. What is labeled as misinformation today could easily turn out to be a legitimate opinion or even a new discovery tomorrow. This vagueness gives too much power to authorities to decide what we can and cannot say.

**Solution:** If we're going to address harmful information, the bill needs clear and specific guidelines. There also needs to be a way for the public to weigh in on what should be considered harmful, keeping the process fair and transparent.

#### Impact on Independent Voices

This bill will likely have the greatest impact on individuals and independent media—those who challenge the mainstream narrative. We need these voices to keep our society balanced and well-informed. If the government starts controlling what is said, we could end up with a one-sided view of things.

**Solution:** Instead of tightening control, the government should create an environment where all perspectives can thrive. This can be done by encouraging independent fact-checking, not by giving all the power to government agencies.

#### Loss of Public Trust

If this bill goes through, it could seriously damage trust in both the government and the media. People need to feel heard and that their views matter. Silencing them will only create more skepticism and division.

**Solution:** The government should focus on clear, open communication and let people make up their own minds. Rather than blocking content, provide accurate, up-to-date information and let the public engage with it freely.

#### International Influence on Australian Law

Australia's laws should reflect the will of its people, not be overly influenced by international bodies. The International Health Regulations in 2024, which push for Australia to address "misinformation," could threaten our national sovereignty.

**Solution:** Any decisions about misinformation should prioritise Australia's values. International advice should be considered but not be the final word on how we handle free expression.

## Recommendations for Moving Forward

If we really want to tackle misinformation and disinformation while still protecting our freedoms, I suggest

**Promote Media Literacy:** Let's teach people how to critically assess the information they see instead of simply deciding what's allowed.

**Be Transparent:** Government communication should be honest and open, providing all the facts, so people can make informed decisions without feeling their voices are being shut down.

**Support Independent Fact-Checking:** Encourage independent groups to fact-check content, avoiding government bias.

**Public Input:** Make sure the public has a say in determining what is or isn't misinformation. No single body should hold all the power to decide what's true.

Conclusion, the MAD Bill poses a real threat to free speech and the ability to express different ideas in Australia. While misinformation is a problem, we need solutions that don't compromise our fundamental rights. I urge Parliament to rethink the bill and find better ways to combat false information without taking away our freedom to speak and think for ourselves.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts.

Yours sincerely,

### Sample 73

Dear Sir/Madam

About me. \_\_\_\_\_, mid \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Australian Citizen who is concerned enough about Australia to write this submission.

I do not agree with the concept of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 and suggest it be removed in its entirety.

I believe it creates an opportunity for the Australian Government of the day, to label opinions and facts, that do not suit its narrative, as "misinformation," "disinformation," or "harmful" on social disinformation that was distributed by the Governments of the day, about COVID during the "pandemic".

This legislation has been proposed by government for government.  
It will hinder freedom of speech and remove debate.

It will stop individual opinion, critical thinking, personal growth, intellectual development and evolution due to fear of recourse.

Imagine, if this type of legislation held sway over parliamentary debate?

### Sample 74

Dear Committee members,

I am opposed to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 [Provisions] in principle.

I believe that there is a far greater danger to our democracy and society which would arise from bureaucratic or governmental control over expression of opinion than the risk presented by people having the opportunity to spread misinformation or disinformation.

This is in part because there is often no objective basis for anyone at a particular point in time, however well-intentioned or principled, to accurately determine what is true and what is false. The truth can take time to emerge, after debate and rebuttal, argument and research. Western society has accepted this reality and has become accustomed to healthy debate in all fields of life.

Our Parliament itself reflects this understanding. Good legislation is always more likely to emerge from widespread consultation, thoughtful deliberation, robust argument and the opportunity to hear and accommodate discordant voices. Just as rushed legislation often turns out to be poor legislation, instant decisions by any individual or small group about the accuracy or otherwise of information is likely to lead to bad decisions. In fact, it is inevitable that over time and over a large number of rulings, some decisions would be made to censor material which later proved to be true. This could cause significant harm.

These objections would be valid even in the context of well-intentioned, principled people being the ones making these decisions. But human nature being what it is and the temptations of power being great, it is obvious that such power in the hands of less scrupulous people would present a grave threat to our democratic freedoms. Freedom of speech is the bedrock on which all our other freedoms rest. If we cannot speak up freely, all our other freedoms can be gradually undermined.

Please reject this Bill. It is not worthy of amendment, as it is bad in principle.

Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 75**

To the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee,

I write to formally object to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 due to its potential to significantly undermine freedom of speech and public discourse in Australia.

While I acknowledge the government's concern regarding the spread of misinformation and disinformation, particularly in areas that affect public health and safety, this Bill poses serious risks to the foundational principles of free speech and open democratic debate. Here are the key reasons for my objection:

**Erosion of Free Speech:** The proposed bill gives the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) expanded regulatory powers over digital platforms. While the bill claims to safeguard against only "seriously harmful" content, the broad and vague definition of "misinformation" and "disinformation" leaves open the possibility for subjective interpretation, especially when defining harm. This could result in the suppression of legitimate opinions, dissent, or debate, especially when the boundary between harmful misinformation and controversial or unpopular viewpoints is unclear.

History has shown that attempts to regulate speech in any capacity risk overreach, potentially leading to a chilling effect where individuals and organisations hesitate to voice opinions out of fear of regulatory consequences. Freedom of speech, as enshrined in international law and our democratic values, is crucial to ensuring that diverse viewpoints, even those that challenge popular opinion, can be expressed without interference (Dept of Infrastructure).

**Potential for Censorship and Abuse:** While the bill claims ACMA will not have the power to take down individual pieces of content, it nevertheless allows the government to enforce codes or standards on platforms if self-regulation is deemed insufficient. This essentially puts the government in a gatekeeping position over information shared on digital platforms, creating a dangerous precedent where political or bureaucratic motives could influence what content is deemed acceptable. History has shown that when regulatory bodies wield this much power, there is always a risk of censorship and abuse.

**Existing Protections Are Sufficient:** Many platforms already have robust systems in place to manage misinformation through self-regulatory measures such as content moderation policies, flagging systems, and partnerships with independent fact-checkers. Adding an additional layer of government-enforced regulation is unnecessary and burdensome. Furthermore, Australia's defamation laws already provide remedies for individuals harmed by false or misleading content. The introduction of this bill creates a duplicative and excessive regulatory framework.

**Undermines Public Trust:** Rather than combatting misinformation, the bill may unintentionally erode public trust in government institutions and digital platforms. When users feel that their ability to



freely express their opinions is being curtailed, they may turn to alternative, less regulated sources of information that further promote harmful disinformation. Transparent and open debate is the best tool we have to combat falsehoods, rather than increased regulation.

In conclusion, while combating misinformation is a noble goal, the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 is not the right solution. It threatens to undermine freedom of expression, stifle public debate, and set a dangerous precedent for government overreach in regulating speech. I urge the Committee to reject the bill and instead focus on supporting voluntary, self-regulatory measures that empower individuals to critically assess the information they encounter online.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 76**

As a concerned citizen, I am writing to express my deep reservations about the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. While I understand the importance of combatting misinformation and disinformation in today's digital age, I believe that the provisions outlined in this bill go too far in restricting freedom of speech and impeding on the rights of individuals.

The broad and vague language used in the bill could easily be misinterpreted and lead to censorship of legitimate opinions and viewpoints. As someone who values open discourse and the free exchange of ideas, I fear that this bill could have a chilling effect on public debate and stifle dissenting voices.

Furthermore, the potential for government overreach and abuse of power is a real concern. The provisions in the bill grant authorities sweeping powers to monitor and control online content, raising serious questions about privacy rights and civil liberties.

In light of these troubling implications, I urge the Senate to reconsider the passage of this bill and instead focus on alternative solutions to combat misinformation and disinformation. We must strike a balance between protecting the public from harmful content and upholding the principles of democracy and free speech.

I believe that this bill is not the answer and call for its abandonment. Thank you for considering my input on this important matter.

### **Sample 77**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: "Combating Misinformation and Disinformation" Bill 2024

I respectfully and urgently request that this Bill be rejected as I am appalled at its very proposal for the following reasons.

#### **1. Democracy WELCOMES free speech.**

Free speech may oppose government, or may oppose Bills (such as this one). Speech may be unpleasant or offensive at times, however, society rises with critical thinkers expressing their thoughts, and where offensive speech occurs, the right to countenance is there. Limiting free speech diminishes us all.

#### **2. Free speech IS a human right.**

Differing, opposing and uncomfortable views will always be a part of life - indeed, opposition is what makes many, if not most, review and reflect on methods, processes and proposals. Limiting free speech is infantilising.

#### **3. Australia IS a Democracy**

Legislating discourse is both controlling and patronising - a significant retrogressive step for our society. Free speech is a key adjunct for our evolving democracy. This Bill heralds a shocking



draconian overreach for controlling free speech — a complete anathema of the governance our society has worked toward over the eons.

#### 5. A Democracy DOES NOT control speech

Robust discussions and opposing views elevate each generation. Assessment and review of government and free speech is our individual responsibility within society.

If passed, this Bill annihilates our Democracy.

Request to Reject the Bill. With only one week to object, time is closing in. Please make a stand and uphold our Human Right for freedom of speech. For the sake of us all and future generations, I urgently request that this Bill not be passed.

Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 78**

To the Committee members,

You have given me a very short timeframe to read and understand the Bill and the EM so I remain uninformed while trying to make a submission.

I believe the Bill proposes to exempt the government and the media from the effects of the Bill - why? They are two potential sources of misinformation and disinformation (see history) and both sources have a very large reach in the spread of information.

The government and the ministers no doubt see themselves as leaders. Great leaders hold themselves to a higher standard than those they want to influence. Exempting yourselves from the effects of this Bill while holding all others to account is not good leadership, it is weak leadership and at times paranoid.

Deciding what is mis and dis information and the criteria used to identify this when someone thinks they can see it would be ridiculously (impossibly) difficult and it has been so the more that people live from subjective points of view over time while abandoning any objective grounding.

For the government to give themselves this power that the Bill proposes would be to potentially disempower all people in Australia. Does the government really want to be this kind of entity?

Yours,

### **Sample 79**

I am writing to you express my deep concern regarding the proposed Communication & Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 . The bill is a guise to “protect Australians from harmful misinformation this bill, poses a serious threat to freedom of speech and democratic principles, will threaten our constitutional rights of freedom of speech. In fact this bill will eliminate free speech entirely. It will be a loss of human rights, to speak the real truth.

The broad definitions of misinformation and harm combined with the immense powers granted to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) create significant risks for the suppression of legitimate public debate. Particularly alarming is the exemption granted to government content which would allow state-sanctioned information to be protected while dissenting opinions could be censored.

This imbalance echoes the practices of authoritarian regimes, where government narratives are enforced, and opposition is silenced. Specifically government content may be exempt from being classified as misinformation creating a situation where the government’s narrative is protected, while opposing views could be censored. this imbalance echoes practices in authoritarian societies, where state-controlled information is promoted while alternative perspectives are suppressed.

The lack of clear safeguards for free speech and the potential for abuse of power are troubling.

Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of our democracy. Laws aimed at combatting misinformation must not undermine the very freedoms they seek to protect.

I urge you to consider these implications and reject the Bill.

Australia's democracy is founded on open debate and the exchange of diverse ideas, even those that may be controversial or unpopular.

Please protect these values by ensuring that any legislation preserves our democratic freedoms.

Sincerely

### **Sample 80**

I am very concerned about the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024.

It has the ability to enable the suppression of various opinions and free speech. The definition of misinformation and disinformation outlined in the Bill are widespread and subjective.

Free speech is imperative to our democracy. We need laws to protect speech, not further eradicate it. Censorship powers on the Australian public are authoritarian and should not be encouraged by our democratic government.

This Bill grants considerable power to ACMA to enforce regulations and demand information from online platforms. The ability of the government to access information about what private citizens think is more power than our government should seek, nor should it be handed over to foreign owned (Big Tech) companies to control.

I would like my children to grow up in a country that encourages questions, critical thinking and debate. Not a country that suppresses different viewpoints or makes accusations of 'misinformation' or 'disinformation' to silence discussion. As the 'facts' tend to change over time.

I believe this bill should be rejected completely.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 81**

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. As an \_\_\_\_\_-year-old Australian citizen, I have witnessed the erosion of our freedom of expression over the years, and this bill only serves to exacerbate that trend. The proposed legislation extends the scope of prohibited speech to include opinions or beliefs that are deemed harmful based on subjective and vaguely defined terms. This further restricts our right to free speech, which is a fundamental right enshrined in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

I fear that the potential civil penalties against digital platforms outlined in the bill may lead to these platforms taking overly cautious approaches, resulting in the removal of lawful content that may be contentious but not necessarily harmful. This could have a detrimental impact on political, social, or minority viewpoints, stifling public discourse and impeding the exchange of diverse ideas and opinions.

As such, I urge the Committee to reconsider the provisions of this bill and ultimately recommend that it be abandoned. We need legislation that protects and promotes free speech, not further constrains it. Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 82**

I wish to lodge a submission to voice my strong objection to the above Bill.

This bill would severely curtail unfettered free speech by putting onerous responsibilities on social media platforms across issues as wide as electoral, health, social and economic.

In practice the Government will define "truth" and will essentially silence alternative voices.

There should never be one person or department given the responsibility to define what is truth and/or harm.

Misinformation/disinformation is combated by allowing more debate rather than a silencing of one side.

This is a massive overreach by the government to squash dissenting points of view and it will take Australia a dangerous leap towards facism.

I also demand that the government host public hearings to this Bill to enable the public a greater opportunity to express their views on this Bill.

Seven days to lodge Submissions is disingenuous and goes against the democratic values that we as Australians support.

### **Sample 83**

To the Committee Secretariat

In reference to The Communications Legislation Amendment (combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024(Provisions)

I hereby express my ardent and strongest opposition to this bill and anything that censors our freedom of speech.

I also demand that the Government hold public hearings into this bill.

To facilitate this process I also demand an extension of time of more than one week into this inquiry.

Thank you in advance for the acceptance of my submission.

Regards

### **Sample 84**

Dear Members of the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee,

I am writing to express my concern and disapproval of the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 currently under review. While I understand the intention to address the issue of "misinformation" and "disinformation", I believe that the bill, as it stands, presents significant risks to freedom of speech and open discourse in Australia.

Granting the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) new powers to regulate digital communications platforms could lead to unintended consequences, including overreach and censorship. The broad nature of these regulatory powers leaves room for subjective interpretation of what constitutes misinformation or disinformation, which may lead to the suppression of legitimate speech, especially if it challenges prevailing narratives or government policy.

Additionally, empowering digital platforms to assess and report on misinformation introduces a level of self-censorship, where platforms may over-regulate content in order to avoid penalties. This creates an environment where public debate could be stifled, potentially limiting Australians' access to diverse opinions and information.

While I appreciate the need to tackle misinformation, I believe the bill's current approach risks undermining fundamental democratic principles. The freedom to express differing opinions, even those that may be controversial or unpopular, is essential to a healthy democracy.

If the bill became law under a poor or authoritarian leader in the future, it could lead to significant restrictions on free speech, reduced political accountability, and an environment where citizens are less able to challenge the government, weakening Australia's democratic values.

I urge the committee to reconsider the provisions of this bill and explore alternative methods that balance the need to combat misinformation with the protection of free speech/expression.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

### **Sample 85**

To whom it may concern,

This bill is disastrous for the nation; it is a nail in the coffin for free speech and marching Australia towards an authoritarian dystopia. In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the universal declaration of Human Rights, and Article 19 of that declaration says, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers."

With this bill, Australia is empowering the government to shut down any dissenting views that challenge authority. Australia became great through open debate and the free exchange of ideas. This legislation threatens to undermine the very principles that have allowed our society to thrive. It is imperative that we protect our right to free speech and ensure that all voices can be heard, regardless of whether they align with the government's views.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 86**

Hello there,

I write to you in order to express my concerns about Mis/Dis/Information Bill.

This Bill should not proceed any further. This submission is intended to be fully public, including my name.

Forget not that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Many things in theory make sense and seem reasonable - a piece of legislation architected to stop the kind of information which muddles the water and leads people astray? Great!

However, like with any situation where blanket-outlawing is in place, nuance is required.

Nuance is a thing that is all too commonly lost in the processes of law, if not just because of the individual perceptions, biases, fatigue and stress levels of our legislation's enforcers and judges. Whether the intention is good or not, this is the kind of bill which would certainly throw many babies out in its bathwater, and what it is aiming to attend to is not worthy of such likely collateral.

This bill is simply not worth the damage it all-too-likely will do.

Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 87**

To the Senate,

It is very disturbing to me that some people in this world are hell bent on destroying people with a voice. WHY!!

We sent Anzacs as young as 17 to fight, they gave up their lives so all Australians can be free and have a voice and not feel threatened in any way.

But yet we now have a Government that is trying everything in the power to stop exactly what our Anzacs fought for.

It is a disgrace to the Australians and a KICK in the GUTS to those lost Anzac souls.

It is not the Governments job to tell us what is true and what is not, determining the truth or non truth is up to the individual, and should ALWAYS BE!

This 'Bill' just proves to every Australian ...who knows about it!! that something sinister maybe going on with this government.

What is more disturbing is that this government is trying to take one of our most treasured liberties away and the mainstream media have nothing to say about it ...crickets!!

In closing I would like to say, while I can!!, It's important to all Australians and Future Australians that their opinions and their voices are heard, this 'Bill' directly effects those freedoms.

This 'Bill' should end up in the bin.

### **Sample 88**

Hi there.

I respectfully ask that the proposed Misinformation/Disinformation Bill be abandoned immediately.

I, like so many others, cherish the freedoms that living in this Country provides.

This could explain the increase in migration to this Country, away from Authoritarian Regimes.

My belief is that any law that imposes a restriction on myself, to respectfully express my views publicly, is invasive censorship and has no place in our society.

As a Senior Citizen I have witnessed the erosion of freedoms that my ancestors took for granted. This needs to stop before we become refugees from our own land.

I also wish to demand a Public Hearing of the proposed Bill if it is not abandoned.

Perhaps it is a reasonable proposal, and I am suffering from misinformation.

Once all of the details are made available to the Public for a fair debate, I can make a reasonable decision on it. As will the Public.

I believe this to be Democratic.

Thank you for your consideration,

### **Sample 89**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 currently under review.

While the intention to address misinformation and disinformation is commendable, the proposed measures raise serious issues that must be critically examined.

The bill's framework grants excessive regulatory powers to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), imposing burdensome obligations on digital communications platforms. These requirements not only threaten the operational viability of many platforms but also pose a significant risk to freedom of expression and the fundamental principles of open communication that underpin our democratic society.

Moreover, the vague definitions of "misinformation" and "disinformation" create ambiguity that could lead to arbitrary enforcement and censorship. This is particularly concerning in a diverse media landscape where differing perspectives and dissenting voices are essential for a healthy public discourse.

We must ensure that any measures to combat misinformation do not inadvertently stifle legitimate discussion or hinder the exchange of ideas. I urge the committee to reconsider the implications of this bill and to seek more balanced and transparent solutions that uphold our democratic values while effectively addressing the challenges of misinformation.

Thank you for considering my views on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 90**

As an Australian citizen I'm very concerned about this disinformation and misinformation bill trying to be passed at the moment.

Any Bill that tries to limit anyone's freedom of speech is not ok.

Who can be trusted to be the arbiter of truth no one can.

As a citizen of Australia I'm very concerned that a government would be pushing this especially without a lot of public knowledge.

Please we must stop this bill immediately.

Australia is a wonderful country we must not allow it to be dictated by anyone.

Thank you

### **Sample 91**

I am writing to inform you of my strong objections to the upcoming misinformation and disinformation bill.

Science is the endeavour to uncover facts and understand the natural world. Despite the greatest minds working diligently for several centuries, scientific facts are still hard to come by. Rather scientific knowledge develops, evolves and matures with time and information.

It is simply impossible for a government agency to be the arbiter of truth and fact. Even worse if it tries to be the arbiter of opinions and beliefs.

Let me give you an example.

There are hundreds of religions in the world. Scientifically it is only possible for one or none to be correct. All others, scientifically, must be misinformation or disinformation.

WHO decides\?

### **Sample 92**

I strongly express my opposition to the captioned Bill and any similar measures that censor free speech.

I require instead public hearings into the Bill - noting that given the government has only given a week for comments, it is clearly intent on NOT having public hearings which is completely unacceptable given the Orwellian consequences if this Bill passes into law.

This Bill acts to censor social media of anything that the government deems to be 'harmful' mis-or disinformation.

Governments including yours, are terrible judges of what 'harmful' mis-or disinformation is. The best judge is us the people - who voted you into office and the public square of social media, that we

occupy. This includes governmentally inconvenient investigators. For sure there are ratbags and malicious actors, including foreign governments and the mass media.

But we, your public and voters are not, in bulk, idiots. The bleach that we apply with critical thinking in the public square of social media is very effective in oxidising away 'mis-or disinformation' to reveal something that approaches truth.

Truth that we require to judge and ultimately vote on.

I strenuously object to this Bill. We do not want, in effect, a Ministry of Truth which will come of this Bill, precisely when the world tatters on the edge of global conflict, an all powerful military industrial complex and financial collapse.

We all need (including your government) open free debate in the public square of social media to navigate these truly perilous times. Think on that, please.

Yours sincerely

### **Sample 93**

To Committee Secretary Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications,

I am against the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 because I value the right to free speech. I will make my own decisions about what information I deem to be truthful as I have always done. I do not want the government restricting me from information they interpret as not true.

Communication is very important, the freedom to express yourself and share opinions and information without fear.

I call for a public hearing on this most important matter.

Kind Regards,

### **Sample 94**

Dear Committee members,

Our concerns with this Bill can be summarised as follows:

1. The very idea of this Misinformation and Disinformation Bill is completely at odds with the nature of an open society and a constitutional democracy like Australia;
2. The majority of Australian citizens will lack the rights and protections afforded to a minority of citizens and selected institutions by this Bill, stratifying our nation;
3. This Bill will have a chilling effect upon freedom of thought and expression in Australia, resulting in the loss of constructive debate in all areas of national life; and
4. This Bill will destroy one of the fundamental conditions for human flourishing and dramatically affect our capacity to relate to each other as equal citizens.

Thank you for your consideration and best wishes for your deliberations,

Yours sincerely

### **Sample 95**

Dear Secretary

I am making a submission to strongly reject and advise against this bill. This bill is an attack on free speech, empowering authorities to shut down any dissenting voices. The United Nations universal Declaration of Human Rights says everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression This bill does not in any way conform to that universal declaration that Australia is party to.

Who decides what misinformation and what truth is? Just the Government or the controlled mainstream media and any dissenting opinion of the people not allowed!

If this legislation goes through we will no longer be living in a democracy.

Regards

### **Sample 96**

Dear Sir,

I am contacting you to advise of my strong opposition to the proposed Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2024.

This Bill is a direct attack on freedom of speech for all Australian Citizens and Residents.

There is no evidence that the public want this proposal. This does not even appear in the Proposal.

There has been no public consultation and deliberately little time made available for discussion.

There has not been any explanation of what terms in the Bill actually mean, thus leaving freedom for authorities to enact whatever degree of enforcement for practically whatever reason they deem appropriate.

There is zero recourse available to affected persons, should they dispute any actions upon them by the Bill.

Making Government and Mass Media exempt from the Bill only highlights the possible nefarious intent behind the proposal that the public already perceive.

Passing this Bill into Law will assuredly result in mass public outcry and create exactly the dissent the Government is attempting to quash.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

### **Sample 97**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am compelled to voice my deep concerns about the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024. The broad and vague definitions of misinformation and disinformation are alarmingly subjective, posing a real threat to the expression of diverse viewpoints.

Australia already struggles with adequate protections for freedom of expression, and this Bill stands to further undermine this essential right. By expanding the scope of prohibited speech, it risks fostering an environment where fear of censorship stifles genuine public discourse. This could silence critical political and social voices, leading to a less vibrant democracy.

We must protect our ability to express differing opinions and engage in meaningful conversations. I urge you to reconsider and abandon this Bill for the sake of our fundamental freedoms.



### **Sample 98**

I would like to make my submission to the Senate and advise my discontent with such an attempt at control proposed by this government over the Australian people.

The bill points to the clear possibility of a two tier system of those that may speak and those that may not speak.

It is an attempt at silencing opposing voices and constructive conversation many areas.

This is an attack on free speech which is an important part of a functional and prosperous society.

The Australian people are quite capable of choosing what voice works for them and establish their own opinion from a wide selection of information to inform their voting and personal opinions and actions.

To ban opposing voices gives too much political control to one class of people and rejects the feelings and opinions of the rest so this is CLEARLY unacceptable!!

Your faithfully,

### **Sample 99**

This proposed bill stands out as one of the most unusual and troubling pieces of legislation in Australian history. As a woman who values diverse perspectives, I am particularly concerned about its broad definitions of misinformation and disinformation. These vague criteria could easily suppress the voices of conservative, religious, and minority groups, limiting meaningful discourse on crucial issues.

The potential impact on freedom of expression cannot be understated. This right is fundamental and recognized in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, yet the bill seems poised to undermine it. By labeling opinions as "harmful" based on subjective interpretations, we risk silencing important conversations that shape our society.

Furthermore, the erosion of public trust in our democratic institutions is alarming. Granting the government excessive power to regulate speech opens the door to potential abuse, reminiscent of authoritarian regimes. It's essential for the public to hold our government accountable, and this bill threatens that transparency.

The involvement of Big Tech in our political discourse also raises significant concerns. Allowing these foreign-owned entities to influence what information is shared could sway election outcomes and compromise the integrity of our democracy.

In summary, this bill represents an unprecedented threat to free expression, public trust, and the rich tapestry of viewpoints that make Australia vibrant. As women, we must advocate for laws that protect our voices, not silence them.

### **Sample 100**

Dear committee,

I, \_\_\_\_\_ a citizen of Australia have huge concerns with the communications legislation amendment- combatting misinformation and disinformation. There needs to be protection for free speech even when it lies that misinform. I hope you will vote down this bill and instead push forward protections on free speech!

Also I wish for there to be a public hearing.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,