

23 April 2024

PRIME MINISTER PEDDLING MISINFORMATION ABOUT MISINFORMATION LAWS

"The federal government is blatantly misleading the public in linking the terrible attacks in Sydney to its proposed misinformation laws, which are designed to do nothing more than censor the opinion of mainstream Australians online," said John Storey, Director of Law and Policy at the Institute of Public Affairs.

In seeking to use the recent knife attack at Bondi Junction, and the religiously motivated terror attack on the Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel at Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakefield, as justification for its proposed misinformation laws, the federal government is not being honest and upfront with Australians about its motivations.

"After the Voice to Parliament referendum failed last year, the federal government cynically sought to blame the result on so-called 'misinformation', and used the outcome to push forward with its proposed internet censorship laws," said Mr Storey.

"The government is now up to the same trick in attempting to link the stabbings in Sydney on misinformation, so it can hand enormous powers to unelected officials to censor debate it does not agree with."

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister sought to use these terrible attacks to justify his online censorship push, saying *"now surely there is now a recognition that misinformation is a problem on social media."*

Previously, the federal communications minister Michelle Rowland claimed on ABC radio the attacks were evidence misinformation *"is causing real world harm"* and vowed *"we are determined to get [misinformation laws] introduced because we can see the harms that are being caused now."*

The eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman-Grant has also sought to use the attacks to wield unprecedented censorship powers to *"minimise the amount of content Australians can see"*.

"Using these attacks to push misinformation laws is a grubby power grab by the federal government, which Australians will see through when exposed to open debate," said Mr Storey.

"There is a genuine problem where violent content is exposed to children online. Powers already exist under law to deal with these matters. Yet, the proposed misinformation laws have no bearing on this, and are instead aimed at shutting down mainstream opinion and debate."

Recent IPA research revealed how the government's misinformation laws would undermine our democracy, by targeting one side of debate. That research found that **65 per cent of fact checking of claims by political figures delivered verdicts favourable to left-of-centre politicians. Just 35 per cent could be assessed as favourable to right-of-centre politicians.**

"The federal government is a government of censorship, actively peddling misinformation of its own by misleading the community into believing that these attacks could have been prevented through misinformation laws," said Mr Storey.

To download the IPA's research [click here](#).

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