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INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECURES MAJOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH VICTORY FOR MAINSTREAM AUSTRALIANS

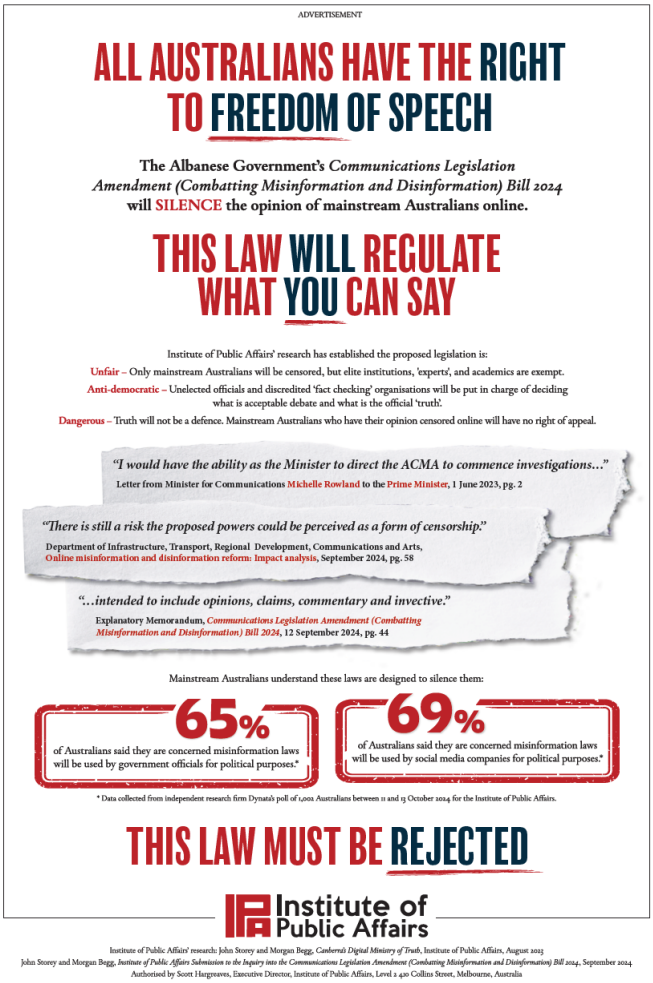
"The federal government's capitulation on its proposed 'misinformation' laws is a big win for mainstream Australians who would have been silenced by the elites of Canberra," said Daniel Wild, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs.

All Australians have the right to freedom of speech, and the IPA has upheld its long tradition of leading the debate against laws that seek to silence them. The proposed 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' laws were just the latest example.

"Make no mistake, these laws were designed to regulate what mainstream Australians could say online. It was unfair, anti-democratic, and dangerous," said Mr Wild.

"The withdrawal of this legislation is a seismic blow against the federal government, and the global censorship agenda, which sought to silence online debate. Now that the bill has been withdrawn, the federal government must commit to never introducing comparable laws again."

As the threat of such laws has not gone away entirely, the IPA has decided to still publish its long-planned advertisement in *The Australian* today calling for the full rejection of these draconian laws in the week it was originally scheduled for debate.



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The IPA was the first organisation in Australia to research and communicate the problems with 'misinformation' laws when first proposed in March 2022. At the time, then IPA Director of Policy, Gideon Rozner, said "*the idea federal bureaucrats should be given sweeping internet censorship powers to stifle the opinions of mainstream Australians is bizarre as it is terrifying.*"

"The IPA is immensely proud of the research it has undertaken to communicate to the public and policymakers the dangers of 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' laws. We led the debate from day one and, pleasingly, many others have come to understand the dangers," said Mr Wild.

"While it is a positive that the legislation has been withdrawn, Australians should never be faced with such legislation again. Importantly, nor should such legislation be used as a bargaining chip in minority government negotiations. These laws should be rejected fully, once and for all."

"The IPA is Australia's leading voice for free speech. It should never be forgotten that IPA research led the debate against the proposed Finkelstein media regulation laws and it has repeatedly demonstrated why section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* should be repealed."

"Every member of parliament who said they would vote against these laws will be remembered for standing up for freedom of speech. They should be congratulated on taking a principled stand for their constituents, who were on the precipice of having their voice taken away online," said Mr Wild.

To download the IPA's previous research click here.

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