

Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023

Thank you to the committee for allowing submissions to this very important topic.

I will keep my comments brief.

- Firstly, I would like to note the outline of the bill. “Australia has one of the most concentrated news media markets in the world. The Murdoch controlled News Corp owns more than two thirds of all print media outlets in Australia. Through News Corp, the Murdoch empire wields enormous power and political influence, largely unchecked and unchallenged. The impact on democracy is corrosive and has eroded trust in journalism and public institutions.”
What is not mentioned in this outlet is that the Corporation that owns more than two thirds of all print media outlets in Australia, is owned by a corporation based in the United States of America. Would we allow this to occur from any other country other than England? Ally or not the idea that most of our print media, plus a 65% ownership in Foxtel and ownership of News.com.au and many others is in the hands of a foreign owned company is frankly anti-democratic.
The idea of a single entity which was Australian owned being allowed in Australia is also bad for our democracy but a foreign owned one is insanity.
- Next, I would like to comment on the need for a single, independent media regulator to harmonise news media standards and oversee an effective process for remedying complaints.
The problem with this is the same as the problem with the ABC, with the government able to install its own people into the board, CEO etc has meant that the ABC has become little more than a mouthpiece for the government of the day. Subsequently what hope is there for an “independent media regulator” to not just end up as more of the same?
- Finally, “the efficacy of current legal frameworks and mechanisms for managing misinformation and disinformation in the media;”
Australia is in desperate need of both truth in reporting and truth in political advertising laws.
Voting is an Australian’s greatest right and heaviest burden, but it is made harder by the ability for political parties to flood the media with lies and half-truths.

As to the news it should be a criminal offense to knowingly spread misinformation as a media company or its employee.

In the USA in 1949 laid the foundation for the fairness doctrine that licensees must not use their stations "for the private interest, whims or caprices [of licensees], but in a manner which will serve the community generally. They established two forms of regulation on broadcasters: to provide adequate coverage of public issues, and to ensure that coverage fairly represented opposing views.

This is what we need in Australia where not only licensees but for large and medium media companies to provide adequate coverage of public issues, and to ensure that coverage fairly represented opposing views. The amount of news not published by media companies both public and private is astounding. You will often see things on a corporate news network as major news that the ABC fails to cover and vice versa.

- Finally, I would like to make a note of the fact that news and “opinion” articles created by News Corp and other media outlets that are little more than political advertising for a candidate or party, are not currently classed as political donations and this must be stopped. A News article or opinion piece that uses half truths or blatant lies for a party/politician or against their opponents is a clear political donation by the media company but is not classed as a donation and frankly should not be allowed at all as it once again does not provide adequate coverage of public issues, and to ensure that coverage fairly represented opposing views.

Thank you for your time.