

As a parent, I am concerned about democracy as a whole, as lies are echoed by the media and lead to deny/doubt/delay urgent action needed. Everyone will agree Australia doesn't need a Jan 6 incident in Australia where tens of thousands of people stormed the US congress to stop the peaceful transition after the election. It happened mainly because trusted neutral media, acceptable to most, no longer exist in the US. Slowly such a trend is happening in Australia especially after Murdoch media concentration.

Whatever be the issue at hand - Equality(The Voice, Renters protection), Government Accountability (ICAC), Climate change(Stop fossil fuel expansion), LGBTQ (Stop culture wars), Justice (Chase rape accused who was silent in court instead of rape victim who spoke), COVID19, election,etc there is highly concentrated media echo chamber which echo other linked medias misinformation, disinformation and malinformation 24\*7 in every home without any accountability. ACMA does not investigate all complaints, is very slow to investigate (9 months yearly average time to investigate)and breaches lead to totally ignorable no impact action. Before the last federal election, Murdoch Royal commission demand petition became Australia's largest-ever parliamentary e-petition but no action taken on it post election fearing it might open a can of worms on the current government.

For example, Even though IPCC report & 99% of eminent scientists predict that the impact COVID triggered is only a trailer of what impact climate change will bring, Developed countries are still not taking the lead in renewables and electrify everything, despite climate disasters costing billions of dollars. Unless they show it is achievable & help developing countries, I fear for the world my family & community will be forced to survive in.

Conclusion:

- 1) We need fair, balanced, independent, free media separating reporting of facts and the expression of opinion. Due to media concentration in Australia, fake news echo chambers are created.
- 2) Media being so important for democracy, ACMA being "co-regulator" working with media themselves means it is toothless even if breaches are found. Repeat offenders continue lying without any penalty. We need a hard-nosed Australian Broadcasting Tribunal equivalent now again which was replaced in 1992. Rolling Average time over 12 months for ACMA investigation is a good nine months.
- 3) While Murdoch Fox news pre-settled defamation cases before trial in US & Australia and few anchors fired, it was after Jan 6 and opened a can of worms of how TV executives & anchors were ready to lie for viewership even if they themselves don't believe it . So, we need a Royal commission to bring out how their fake & hate news has impacted people, Government and meaningful actions.
- 4) A lot of public interest news & corruption have been bought out by individual social media rather than major media. Whether it was #Barilaro #JobForMates or #RoyalCommissionForRoboDebt or #Big4Consultants, concentrated media is suppressing these. Likewise, a useless word by politicians is made viral while their policies are not.