MEDIA MATTERS IN NEW ZEALAND
(Incorporating Children's Media Watch)

Campaigning for a better media

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www.viewers.org.nz

The Justice Committee of the NZ Parliament is calling for submissions on the Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill with a closing date of mid-February 2025.

This is a useful piece of legislation certainly and we must commend Minister Paul Goldsmith for it. He and his Government need to be aware, however, that much more needs to be done. It must be said that our Legislature, wearing different stripes over the past 10 years, has generally failed to deal with the onset of the effects of unregulated social media on young people in this country.

This problem should have not reached the stage it has, where it has cost the life of a young female Auckland University student to prompt some action against the blight caused in the lives of many young New Zealand women, by the legislative license allowed here.

Hate Speech victim Farzana Jakubi

It should also be noted that Hate Speech, which this proposal serves to help curb in part, is poisoning our social and political discourse, fuelled by on-line platforms who have no accountability to anyone, pay no tax, and who work to no standards, save their own financial profit.

Recent advances in technology make Hate Speech much more pervasive with the availability of electronic devices like hidden cameras and GPS tracking.

We can safely predict that many more deaths and substantial injuries will be caused to our young and the vulnerable unless or until we green light legislation now in place. In many other countries like our own, to create Safer On-Line platforms for our young people, the European Community has done it, the UK has done it, Australia and Canada have done it, we have not. This is presumably because of some mistaken conflation of Hate Speech and Free Speech. This is surely an ideological nonsense which is costing young lives.

Our own viewer advocacy agencies have all spoken out against the lack of curbs in NZ on sexploitation, threats to kill and maim, bullying and like behaviour which our lack of regulatory restraints allows. These agencies include the Broadcasting Standards Authority, Netsafe, Internet NZ, and the University research and Mental Health people.

The growth of powerful agents like the richest man in the world, who owns a major Social Media platform and who is trying to undermine the elected governments of other countries, as the leaders of France, Germany and Canada have recently drawn attention to, speaks to the extent that we are failing to protect our own citizens in this country against powerful forces within the Blogosphere, which are actively trying to undermine elected democratic governments in the West.

The price of Freedom is always Eternal Vigilance.

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President

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