



## Attacks On Our Freedoms Should Not Be Met With Further Attacks On Our Freedoms

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The Institute of Public Affairs has today rejected Prime Minister Scott Morrison's proposal for more government regulation and control of social media and the internet.

"Open-ended calls for censorship of internet content represent an attack on freedom of speech. Such proposals must be strongly opposed," said Gideon Rozner, Director of Policy at the IPA.

"The events in Christchurch last Friday were a horrifying and reprehensible attack on the freedom of Muslims to practice their faith in peace. However, we cannot respond to an attack on one freedom with an attack on another.

"Incitement to violence is already illegal, to the extent existing laws prevent the direct and clear incitement of violence, they should be enforced, including on online platforms.

"It would be a dangerous and retrograde step to give government agencies wide powers to prohibit content subjectively deemed to be 'hateful'.



“Inevitably, this will see government censorship of content that is distasteful, but not dangerous.

“Government regulation would likely result in the removal of innocuous content while doing little to block content that actually incites violence and facilitates acts of terrorism.

“Similarly, the Morrison Government’s decision to ban Milo Yiannopoulos from entering Australia, now the third position it has held on Yiannopoulos, is weak, pathetic and represents a government unsure of what it believes in. Attacks on our freedoms should not be met with further attacks on our freedoms.

“The Department of Home Affairs claims it can block Yiannopoulos’ visa because he may ‘incite discord in the Australian community or in a segment of that community’, however, there was no such attention by the Department of Muslim cleric Dr Omar Abdelkafy, who just last month toured Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Dr Abdelkafy recently described the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as comedy.

“The ‘potential to incite discord’ is open-ended and could be used to censor the speech of anyone, from the left or right of the political spectrum,” said Mr Rozner.

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