



The Case For The Repeal Of Section 18C

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Below is an excerpt from the foreword of this report by John Roskam.

In 1943, in the midst of the Second World War – a war fought to defend human freedom – the Institute of Public Affairs was founded.

Enshrined in the Constitution of the Institute of Public Affairs is the objective to ‘further the individual, social, political and economic freedom of the Australian people’.

Australia is a wonderful country. Since 1945 some 7 million people have chosen to live and work and bring up the families in Australia. They have chosen Australia because we are a free country. My parents came to Australia in search of a better life from a continent ravaged by war.

The origins of our successful, multicultural society were laid in the 1950s and 1960s when people from all backgrounds were welcomed as Australians, regardless of from where they came. At the time when Australia was welcoming unprecedented numbers of new arrivals to our shores it would



have been inconceivable to suggest that the state should punish someone for uttering words that offended or insulted someone. The attempt to police and regulate and control speech was characteristic of governments from which people were seeking refuge.

Australia could only offer that welcome because we were a free country, steeped in the political practice and cultural traditions of democracy and liberalism and freedom. The most important of the freedoms that Australians have fought and died for is freedom of speech.

This issue is of great consequence to Australian democracy. My view is if we allow one of these pillars of freedom to become regulated by the state, why then should we not expect the same to occur for the other freedoms that we enjoy – they are all bound together.



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