

# IPA MEDIA RELEASE

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## IPA WELCOMES INQUIRY ON FREE SPEECH

The Institute of Public Affairs today welcomed the announcement of a parliamentary inquiry by the human rights committee into section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and curbs on freedom of speech in Australia.

"This would help break the deadlock in parliament over section 18C and provide people with an opportunity to outline the consequences of limiting freedom of speech," said John Roskam, Executive Director of the IPA.

Section 18C makes it unlawful to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" a person on the basis of their "race, colour, or national or ethnic origin".

"The renewed political attention into the harm of section 18C is particularly necessary in light of a drawn out complain against three QUT students that was thrown out last Friday in the Federal Circuit Court, ending three years of legal misery and costing Australian taxpayers and the students hundreds of thousands of dollars."

"The complaint against Bill Leak shows that section 18C restricts freedom of speech and freedom of the press."

"Laws which restrict freedom of speech have no place in a liberal democracy such as Australia. Section 18C must be changed."

"The Prime Minister should be congratulated for encouraging debate about reform of section 18C and freedom of speech in Australia," Mr Roskam.

### **On Gillian Triggs and the Human Rights Commission:**

"For Gillian Triggs to imply changing the threshold levels would have prevented the QUT case is laughable. Gillian Triggs stated herself on the 7.30 report last night that the QUT case had 'substance', so no matter what the threshold was this case would have proceeded."

"The punishment has been the process, but the problem is not the threshold. The problem is the Human Rights Commission and Section 18C."

The IPA's video on the QUT case "How 18C is corrupting our legal rights" can be viewed [here](#).

The IPA's video on the Bill Leak case "How the Bill Leak case shows the dangers of 18C" can be viewed [here](#).

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