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EMERGENCY PLEBISCITE LAW A MAJOR THREAT TO FREE SPEECH

Free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs has today criticised the government's emergency plebiscite vilification law as another attack on freedom of speech.

"This vague legislation is completely unnecessary, as there are already federal and state bases laws against incitement," said Simon Breheny, Director of Policy at the Institute of Public Affairs

"The Coalition government is playing with fire by creating an anti-free speech precedent that a future Labor government will undoubtedly seek to make permanent."

"Vilification laws are used to silence opponents. Attempts to limit the scope of public debate are an affront to liberal democratic principles. The government is warning Australians against speaking their mind in case their personal views offend others. These laws are a dangerous limitation on individual freedom."

"The Coalition insists it is capable of protecting freedom of speech and freedom of religion in the event of an amendment to the Marriage Act. In direct contradiction to these commitments, the government is cracking down on opinions before the survey has even taken place."

"What argument will the Coalition be able to fall back on when Labor seeks to extend the Coalition government's own policy?" said Mr Breheny.

For media and comment: Evan Mulholland, Media and Communications Manager, on 0405 140 780, or at emulholland@ipa.org.au