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## JULIE INMAN GRANT A GLOBAL FREE SPEECH THREAT

“Julie Inman Grant has become a law unto herself and is wielding the immense power of her office, with no meaningful democratic oversight, in order to silence online debate and opinion with which she disagrees,” said John Storey, Director of Law and Policy at the Institute of Public Affairs.

A new analysis of the *Online Safety Act 2021* by the Institute of Public Affairs reveals the eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, has largely unchecked powers that enable her to shut down online debate on the basis of her subjective assessment.

In a letter sent today to all federal members of parliament, the IPA establishes that the litigation launched by Ms Inman Grant against social media company X, regarding footage of a stabbing and alleged terror attack in a Sydney church, reveals to Australians how the government's proposed misinformation laws will operate in practice.

The IPA has identified deep flaws in how the *Online Safety Act 2021* is designed, which have directly resulted in the eSafety Commissioner's actions. The IPA's letter identifies three crucial flaws with the current Act:

- **There is no presumption of free speech in the Act;**
- **The Act has overly broad powers and ill-defined concepts; and**
- **There is a lack of democratic oversight.**

“Concerningly, these flaws will be used as a template for the federal government's proposed misinformation laws, which will hand unelected bureaucrats the power to censor debate based on vague concepts and without democratic oversight,” said Mr Storey.

The IPA recommends that the *Online Safety Act 2021* and the proposed misinformation and disinformation bill be abolished and redrafted based on the following principles:

- **There must be a presumption of free speech in any laws that seek to regulate the internet.**
- **Protecting children should be the primary focus of any online regulation.**
- **Only narrow objective tests should apply to any power of censorship.**

“The behaviour of the eSafety Commissioner has highlighted why Australia's ineffective and dangerous internet censorship regime must be overhauled,” said Mr Storey.

“All Australians have the right to freedom of speech online. Governments and activist bureaucrats must never be given a platform to launch personal political vendettas.”

“The current litigation has done nothing more than draw attention to this incident, and the footage concerned both here and abroad. But worse, it has demonstrated how the rights of mainstream Australians to speak their mind and share information can be stifled on the whims of a single, unelected bureaucrat,” said Mr Storey.

To download the IPA's letter to the federal communications minister [click here](#).

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