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## COALITION'S FREE SPEECH REFORM WELCOME BUT NEEDS TO GO FURTHER: IPA LAUNCHES REPEAL 18C CAMPAIGN

The Coalition's announcement that it would reform the *Racial Discrimination Act* is an important and necessary step towards restoring freedom of speech, but should go further, said Chris Berg, Research Fellow with free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

Mr Berg is the author of a forthcoming book on threats to freedom of speech.

Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* makes it unlawful to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" because of a person's race, colour or national or ethnic origin. Opposition legal affairs spokesman George Brandis announced that an Abbott government would remove the words "offend" and "insult" from the Act.

"Freedom of speech is our most basic and fundamental right", said Mr Berg.

"The Coalition's proposal is welcome but restrictions on opinions which 'humiliate' or 'intimidate' would remain. Only a full repeal of Section 18C will ensure that a case like Andrew Bolt's will never occur again in Australia," said Mr Berg.

The Institute of Public Affairs this week launched the **Repeal 18C campaign**, which seeks the abolition of this restriction on freedom of speech entirely – [freespeech.ipa.org.au](http://freespeech.ipa.org.au).

"The Andrew Bolt case shows that Australians' freedom to express their sincerely held opinions has been severely limited by Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

"In a free and open society we will sometimes be offended, embarrassed, even humiliated by the opinions of others, but that should never be an excuse to use the law to shut them up," said Mr Berg.

For more information please visit <http://freespeech.ipa.org.au>

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