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TURNBULL GOVERNMENT MUST ACT ON LAW REFORM COMMISSION 'FREEDOMS' REPORT

"The Australian Law Reform Commission report released today presents the Turnbull government with a significant opportunity to increase the freedoms of all Australians," said Simon Breheny, Director, Legal Rights Project at free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

Commonwealth Attorney-General Senator the Hon George Brandis tabled in parliament the latest Australian Law Reform Commission Report today: *Traditional Rights and Freedoms – Encroachments by Commonwealth Laws*.

"The government must now take action," said Mr Breheny.

"This report is a blueprint for government action on rights and freedoms. The significant work of the ALRC has been important in identifying laws which breach human rights and fundamental legal rights.

"But the real test for the government is the action it takes."

"The report is an endorsement of the IPA's research on freedom of speech and property rights, said Mr Breheny.

"The government must now commit to repealing provisions which restrict freedom of speech, such as section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* and it must commit to repealing provisions which restrict property rights, such as native vegetation legislation."

The report also reaffirms research undertaken by IPA researcher Morgan Begg and Simon Breheny in the 2014 audit of federal laws: *The state of fundamental legal rights in Australia*. The report uncovered 262 legal rights breaches across federal legislation.

"The government must repeal provisions which reverse the burden of proof, undermine principles of natural justice, and strip away the right to silence and the privilege against self-incrimination to ensure that our legal system achieves just outcomes," said Mr Breheny.

"The report also highlights the many problems in Australia's criminal justice system. Issues relating to a fair trial, the burden of proof, offences of strict or absolute liability and privilege against self-incrimination have been examined by the ALRC, and the government must now address these issues," said Mr Breheny.

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