

# IPA MEDIA RELEASE

Institute of Public Affairs | Australia's leading free market think tank

Tuesday 5 August 2014

## COALITION FAILURE TO RESTORE FREE SPEECH

“The Coalition’s failure to fulfil its promise to restore free speech in Australia by repealing section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* is incredibly disappointing,” said John Roskam, Executive Director of the free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* is the law that was used against *Herald Sun* journalist Andrew Bolt in 2011.

On 6 August 2012 to an audience of IPA members in Sydney, then opposition leader Tony Abbott promised that “The Coalition will repeal section 18C in its current form.” He repeated that promise in an address to the IPA’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner in Melbourne on 4 April 2013.

“Abandoning the repeal of section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* is a broken promise,” said Mr Roskam.

“Freedom of speech is fundamental to democracy. If people are not free to debate and discuss ideas then we no longer live in a free society. To retain section 18C is to reject basic liberal principles.

“It is extremely disappointing that the Coalition no longer regards restoring free speech as a priority. Nothing is more important than freedom of speech – it is our most important freedom,” said Mr Roskam.

**For media and comment: John Roskam, Executive Director, 0415 475 673, [jroskam@ipa.org.au](mailto:jroskam@ipa.org.au) or James Paterson, Director of Communications, 0423 502 147, [jpaterson@ipa.org.au](mailto:jpaterson@ipa.org.au)**