

# **IPA MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **TIM WILSON APPOINTED HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER**

The Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, John Roskam, welcomed today's announcement by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, George Brandis that Tim Wilson, Policy Director at the IPA, will be Australia's next Human Rights Commissioner.

"Tim Wilson is a proud, passionate, and uncompromising voice for a classical liberal approach to human rights. Australia needs his voice in public debate now more than ever," John Roskam said.

"Tim Wilson's appointment offers the Australian Human Rights Commission an opportunity to prove it can do something which it has so far failed to do, namely defend the human rights of individuals against attacks on those rights by the state."

"Fundamental human rights like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association have been under attack in Australia by federal and state governments and the Human Rights Commission has stood silent. The Gillard government's so-called 'anti-discrimination' law is an example of how instead of defending human rights the Commission was a willing accessory in attempts to expand government control over what Australians can say and hear and do."

"The Gillard government's 'anti-discrimination' law would have made it unlawful to express a political opinion that offended someone. That law also reversed the onus of proof, and removed the right to legal representation of people accused of breaking the law. Instead of condemning the law, the Human Rights Commission said this assault on human rights didn't go far enough."

"The Commission has also said nothing about the erosion of farmers' property rights by native vegetation laws. Likewise the Commission was missing in action when Stephen Conroy proposed to take away freedom of the press and when he tried to censor the internet."

"The IPA has called for the Commission to be abolished, or at the very least, for Freedom Commissioners to be appointed to balance the four existing Anti-Discrimination Commissioners."

"Tim has been an outstanding advocate for freedom in the seven years he has been at the IPA. The Board and staff congratulate him on his appointment and wish him well on taking up this important role at a time when human rights need to be defended," said Mr Roskam.

The IPA will soon release a major report on those provisions in Commonwealth laws which undermine fundamental legal rights such as the right to silence, the presumption of innocence, and the right to natural justice.

### **For further information and comment:**

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