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HIGH COURT RULING ON NSW CAMPAIGN LAW A WIN FOR FREE SPEECH

Free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs has welcomed today's decision by the High Court to throw out the New South Wales government's restrictions on campaign and election spending.

"The High Court's decision today is a win for free speech," said Chris Berg.

Mr Berg is Policy Director at the Institute of Public Affairs, and author of the 2012 book *In Defence of Freedom of Speech: from Ancient Greece to Andrew Bolt*.

"The Institute of Public Affairs may disagree with trade unions and environmental groups on many issues, but we are in complete agreement with them on the importance of freedom of speech," said Mr Berg.

In February 2012 the New South Wales Parliament passed laws which banned organisations – such as unions, corporations, or non-profit groups – from donating to political parties.

The law was challenged in the High Court by Unions NSW. The High Court today ruled that it violated the Australian Constitution's implied right to freedom of political communication.

"It should be legal for trade unions, corporations, environmental groups and individuals to donate money to political parties and participate in the democratic process," said Mr Berg.

"Any laws that restrict freedom of speech are limitations on our most fundamental rights. Campaign finance restrictions are both a restriction on free speech and suppress democratic political participation," said Mr Berg.

The Institute of Public Affairs has supported the efforts of Unions NSW and the Wilderness Society in opposing this restriction on democratic participation.

For further information and comment:

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