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Internal Affairs stops work on online regulatory reforms

Good afternoon,

1. The Free Speech Union (FSU) is a registered trade union with a mission to fight for, protect, and expand New Zealanders' rights to freedom of speech, conscience, and intellectual inquiry. We believe that freedom of speech is not only a legal principle, but a social good that allows for people in modern liberal democracies to peacefully, freely advocate for the causes they care about without risking unjust retribution.
2. We write to commend Internal Affairs on its decision to stop work on online regulatory reforms. As you may be aware, the FSU facilitated over 90% of the submissions on the issue. While the intention to address 'safety' and online 'harm' is arguably admirable, censorship is not the answer. The proposed structure of a regulator with a code prepared outside of Parliament and political accountability is a weapon that will be used to suppress unpopular or disliked perspectives and opinions. In essence, the proposed reforms are online 'hate' speech laws which are subjective, dangerous, and rightly shelved by the Minister of Justice, Paul Goldsmith earlier this year.
3. By stopping work on the online regulatory reforms, Internal Affairs has upheld free speech in New Zealand and respected our democratic process. Thank you for responding to our submissions and continuing to allow for room for healthy discussion, debate, and exchange of ideas online.

Yours faithfully,

Free Speech Union (New Zealand) Inc.

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