



16 May 2025

Dr Stephen Rainbow
Chief Human Rights Commissioner
Infoline@hrc.co.nz

Proposal for Collaboration on Freedom of Expression Initiatives

Good morning,

1. The Free Speech Union 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. As the country's leading civil liberties organisation focused on free speech, we write to express our interest in building a closer working relationship with your office, particularly given the shared areas of focus between our organisations. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to brief you on our current workstreams and to explore how we might collaborate to promote and protect freedom of expression as a core human right in New Zealand.
3. We are also aware that the Commission is currently developing its position regarding the free speech statements that universities will be required to produce. Given our strong interest in academic freedom and experience supporting students and staff navigating free speech issues on campus, we would welcome the opportunity to contribute constructively to this process.
4. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these proposals in greater detail and to explore avenues for collaboration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Free Speech Union (New Zealand) Inc.

Jonathan Ayling

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