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For Immediate Release**

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson's Backflip No Consolation

Pirate Party Australia wishes to express its dismay at the recent amendments of the Electoral Act and disgust at Attorney-General Michael Atkinson's apparent contempt for the South Australian public.

The South Australian Attorney-General commented with respect to new amendments requiring "anyone making an online comment about next month's state election to publish their real name and postcode."

Mr Atkinson said "There is no impinging on freedom of speech, people are free to say what they wish as themselves, not as somebody else."

Matt Redmond, South Australian Pirate Party spokesperson stated "Every citizen in a democracy has the right to question the government, and in doing so, has the right to protect himself from censure. Even within the narrow scope of this bill, the Government has limited what people will be able to say without fear of retribution. Besides being ludicrously unenforceable, this amendment merely demonstrates that the Government has no interest in representing the people."

He continued "That Ms Redmond and the Opposition raised no substantial objections to these amendments shows that they are just as out of touch with the internet generation as the incumbent Government."

Rodney Serkowski, Pirate Party Australia Secretary criticised Attorney-General Atkinson's comments. "Such comments are completely and utterly ignorant. Anonymity is an essential part of political discourse in any democracy, and an essential part of the freedom of speech. Mr. Atkinson does not seem to realise that someone may choose to maintain their anonymity due to fear of harassment, political or economic retribution and even sometimes, threat to their lives. It is necessary for whistle blowers, those struggling against repressive governments and so forth."

"This is what makes the internet such an important mechanism for the freedom of expression and political discourse. The protection of anonymity works to enable the free flow of ideas, and although I think the initial claims by the Adelaide Advertiser were somewhat broad, the laws are still unworkable, unnecessary, and the effect on the freedom of speech is worrying. Mr. Atkinson's comments however, remain bewildering."

"Although there are issues with anonymous slander, this is a flimsy pretext for systematic assaults on fundamental protections and rights."

David Crafti, Pirate Party Australia President found the legislation to be ridiculously inappropriate. "After passing laws that criminalise citizens for being members of certain groups, there is more reason than ever in South Australia for people to want to comment anonymously." He continued, "As well as copyright and patent reform, it is to fight breaches of civil liberties like this that Pirate Party Australia has been formed. Join our movement to show Michael Atkinson that he can't display this kind of contempt for Australian citizens."

Mr Atkinson has since retreated, declaring that he will move to repeal the legislation retrospectively after the South Australian election, however this displays a certain level of arrogance in presuming that the South Australian public will re-elect him after such a move. This is simply a baseless promise from a politician, who clearly has scant regard for individual liberties. Such legislation should never have been enacted.

About Pirate Party Australia

The Pirate Party Australia is a forming political party, currently seeking membership for the purposes of registration with the Australian Electoral Commission and intends to contest the next Australian federal election if successful.

Pirate Party Australia has an interest in reforming legislation and policy surrounding culture, innovation and the protection of civil liberties, with sister organisations fully registered, seeking registration or otherwise active in over 30 countries throughout the world.

The Swedish Piratpartiet have two elected sitting Members of the European Parliament, after the 2009 European Elections, in which they attained 7.1% of the vote.

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