



Liberal Democrats

Policy: Freedom and Civil Liberties

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The Liberal Democrats believe that freedom is precious, that our freedom is not conferred by government, that government poses great risks to our freedom, and that

the role of government is the defence of freedom.

Policy

The Liberal Democrats believe in:

- Freedom of speech and expression.
- A free media.
- Freedom of association, assembly and movement.
- Freedom over one's own body, beliefs, privacy and property.

Discussion

Freedom of speech is fundamental in a democratic society. The free exchange of ideas and opinions allows these ideas and opinions to be tested, with the more robust being accepted and the less robust being rejected.

Freedom of speech and expression should not be limited because the speech or expression is defamatory, offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates, because it is thought to be wrong, or because it is immoral, indecent, or contrary to community expectations. Freedom of speech and expression should only be limited under long-standing laws against aiding or inciting a crime or disturbing the peace.

There should be no government filtering of the internet, and there should be no bans on movies (except where depicting an actual crime), books or games for adults.

Along with free speech, a free press is particularly important for constraining government. There should be no constraint on owning any media organisation, radio spectrum should be auctioned without conditions, and no one should be required to reveal one's sources.

Restrictions on freedom of association, assembly and movement represent government over-reach. Freedom of association should not be limited by bans on membership of bikie gangs or groups deemed to be terrorist organisations. Long-standing laws against conspiring to carry out a crime are sufficient. Freedom of association should not be limited by prohibitions on joining a trade union, nor on requirements to join one. Freedom to gather in public places without hindering the movement and peace of others should not be limited by curfews, 'move along' powers, or laws against loitering and peaceful protests.

Freedom over one's body includes freedom to take one's own life (and to assist others to do so), to control one's own fertility and to have children, to refuse medical treatment, to obtain one's own medical records, and to give binding health directions in case of subsequent incompetence. We should be free from harassment, from physical harm, and we have a right to privacy, to our own thoughts, opinions and religion, and to our own property.