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**TEST FOR TURNBULL: 18C REPORT DOES NOT RECOMMEND CHANGES TO
EXISTING LAW**

Today the Committee set up to water down race hate speech has found no basis to recommend any changes to Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act.

The report is a victory for common sense and for ethnic communities across Australia who made their voices heard during the committee process.

If Prime Minister Turnbull proceeds with changes to the law, it will be entirely his choice to do so.

Mr Turnbull launched the inquiry into 18C to appease the hard right of his party, who want to protect people who spout racial hate speech. But today's report gives him no cover if he chooses to once again bend to the ideologues.

If Mr Turnbull had any backbone at all, he would use the publication of this report to kill off attempts to water down 18C and the vital protections it provides.

If Mr Turnbull won't show leadership it is up to all of us to say that zero hate speech is the right amount. The fight is not yet over.

Labor can see no guarantee that Mr Turnbull will stand up for ethnic communities, so everyone who opposes hate speech must stand up together.

Freedom of speech and freedom from hate speech are balanced in sections 18C and 18D, which have worked well for decades. Labor fought to protect section 18C in 2014 when Prime Minister Abbott tried to destroy it, and we will fight to protect it again.

Critics of section 18C still have not told us – what do they want to be able to say that they can't say right now?

Labor values multiculturalism, and believes that protections against racial hate speech are worth keeping. Mr Turnbull now needs to declare where he stands.

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

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