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"VOTERS SHOULD BE DEMANDING FEWER PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAYS AND FEWER LAWS, BUT INCREASED PENALTIES FOR ACTUAL WRONGDOING.

Laws of diminishing returns

FORMER American president Ronald Reagan was spot on with this statement: "When government expands, liberty contracts."

Whether you're in business or just enjoy a beer on a Saturday night on the town, governments at all levels are encroaching on nearly everything we do.

And it's in politicians' best interests to make up new things to regulate, because it means they don't have to do as much of the "real" work of getting out into their electorates and talking to people.

There are now so many laws – and their compulsory punishments – that it's hard to think of anything we do that doesn't attract some kind of legal constraint.

Drinking, smoking, speaking, marriage, camping, fishing, driving, hunting, travel, sex, watching live sport, gambling, working, farming ... there is virtually no sphere that doesn't have the cold, clammy hands of federal, state and local politicians all over it.

Rather than sticking to the current system of politicians being flown to Canberra or Brisbane a dozen times a year for parliamentary sittings, we should be advocating for fewer laws to be passed, and for a hell of a lot to be repealed.

OVERLOAD: Just how many laws do we need in our lives?

Aussie think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs, is a major supporter of fewer laws and minimal government intervention into people's lives.

It has calculated that 4016 pages of new laws were passed in 2014. But that's small fry compared with 2012 when 8150 pages were passed.

That's not to mention the hours of reviews, debate and consultation that goes with any new law.

The recent hostile Senate has curbed the number of laws being passed but the question must be asked: Why do we need to keep passing new laws?

It's like the politicians are just trying to justify their existence. "Parliament is sitting next month. Better think of something to regulate."

How about we just stop?

Not one person in Australia (except for the airlines) would be upset if Malcolm Turnbull or Annastacia Palaszczuk said there wouldn't be Parliament next month because there were no new laws to pass.

That would be fantastic.

Politicians could be out and about speaking to more schools, listening to more drivers, getting in the trenches with small-business owners and seeing how ridiculously difficult government red tape makes it to earn a decent living.

They can do far more good in their electorates than sitting in the farce that is the current Australian and state parliaments.

Just last week, the NSW Upper House passed a resolution to call US presidential candidate Donald Trump, "a revolting slug".

In Victoria, the left-wing socialist Labor Government has outlawed "mooning" (that great universal insult of baring the buttocks) and is debating allowing people to choose their own gender on their birth certificates and for parents to choose what gender their children are identified as.

In Queensland, we haven't had any such ludicrous laws pass thanks to the minority government, but Labor has undertaken at least 55 reviews of laws and regulations.

It's clear that politicians are paranoid about being called bludgers, so they are extremely conscious of being seen to be doing something – even if that means hurting their own constituents by constantly creating unnecessary legal constraints.

It's like the environmental lobby. They're never content to just be happy with the gains they've made.

Each year they find some other part of Australia they want to lock up and stop people from using.

What's the endgame?

Similarly, can there ever be a time when 8000 pages of laws in a year won't need to be inflicted on us?

Voters should be demanding fewer parliamentary sitting days and fewer laws, but increased penalties for actual wrongdoing.

So if you're caught being a drunken thug, engaging in unfair or dangerous businesses practices, or damaging the environment, then you will feel the full force of harsh laws.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country can live how they want to live and earn a crust as easily as possible in a society free from the crushing weight of regulation.

The current system is too restrictive, wasteful and grossly unfair.

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