

Politicians should foster reform debate

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Politicians have to be prepared to argue the case for reform and foster, rather than shut down, debate, Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull says.

Launching a new book by Professor Ross Garnaut, Mr Turnbull said the longer he served in parliament “the more convinced I am that we should strive to be the best explainers we can”.

“We cannot just leave it to professors and experts and think tanks – no matter how important they may be. Those who have the biggest megaphones have the biggest responsibility and nobody has a bigger megaphone than a member of parliament.”

Mr Turnbull agreed with Professor Garnaut’s argument in his book Wayne Swan mismanaged the debate over the Henry tax review.

“Had the Henry Report been published when it was received and its contents debated, the problems with the RSPT would have been exposed,” he said. “All it needed was a Treasurer with the confidence to laugh off demands from journalists, and the opposition to ‘rule in’ or ‘rule out’ a particular recommendation.”

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