

Dear Committee Secretary

Re Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

I wish to make a submission to the hearing but firstly, I would like to state that it is you, the Representative of the Australian people, who must make the laws and that the protection of the Australian people be not held to ransom or profit by the Press and Media.

I am a very aged citizen and have lived long enough to know that the security of the nation is dependent upon some degree of secrecy. As a society we must sacrifice some freedoms so as to gain the protection of such a collectivism. Otherwise we will be confronted with anarchy where no contract, no treaty or no understanding will be sacrosanct and any rogue organisation, or foreign nation, can go unchecked with the ability to undermine the very privileges that our State bestows upon its citizens. I am strongly of the belief that a degree of secrecy within Government and particularly the Military is necessary for national security. Without such a guarantee of confidentiality there will be no possibility of organised government, of defence or of meaningful dialogue and "whistle-blowers" will undermine the very foundations of our Nation. If a so called "Free Press" can say what ever it likes, make unsubstantiated accusations and then seek to hide behind a screen of secrecy then the very foundations of an open society is in jeopardy and our country and our way of life is doomed.

But more to the point is Press Freedom. This so-called freedom can be used by unscrupulous journalists, be they national or foreign, to subvert the ordinary practices of any corporation be they privately or publicly owned. The Press do not have this right to subvert any employee as, in doing so, they are demanding that the "whistle-blower" break the law by giving or selling the very secrets that are considered necessary for good governance. Of course, if a member of the Press requests secret or privileged information they are, by their acceptance of this information, also committing a criminal act by knowingly becoming the receiver of stolen goods. The Press should be aware that they, by goading a so-called "whistle-blower" to divulge stolen property, are both calling on a person to become a criminal as well as making themselves accomplices off that crime. I believe that privileged information can be classified as goods in such a case.

I introduced myself as an aged man, and that I am. But age is not always a bad thing in that I have lived long enough to know that not all people are to be trusted and not every one, either fellow countrymen or foreigners, are benevolent. Australia must be eternally vigilant in our efforts to preserve those freedoms that many now seek to squander but such protection must engender a degree of secrecy. I am a retired surgeon but during my entire career maintained an active role as a member of the Australian Defence Force. I would be devastated to see the Press become the instrument and vehicle for foreign governments to "white-ant" our society and undermine the very cornerstones of our nation. We have adequate representation through our parliamentary system to protect the rights of all citizens as well as to preserve freedom as we know it.

In another vein, does not the Press recognised that the Australian Federal Police are only doing what they, the Press, do daily, they seek information by all means at their disposal. Does Australia need or wish for government by the so-called "Shock Jocks" of the media or by the smiling and banal faces of morning television presenters who, on one hand spread the so-called news, and on the other are funded by selling any commodity, good or bad, that a sponsor seeks to peddle.

It is Parliament and not the Press who should have and exercise the freedom of speech. After all, the parliamentary members can and do say what ever they wish be it correct or unsubstantiated. That is what FREEDOM is all about; a nation with an open parliament is a free nation.

Regards

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