

PANPA



Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

May 2, 2009

Dear Committee

Re: Senate inquiry into the reporting of news and the emergence of digital media

We refer to the Supplementary Submission of Australian Associated Press Pty Ltd (AAP) to the Inquiry.

In light of all the evidence submitted to the Inquiry, if the Senate Committee forms the view that intervention is necessary, we would not, in principle, oppose AAP's proposal for a mandatory industry code of practice under the Trade Practices Act as set out at paragraph 2.4 of the Supplementary Submission.

The inclination is to support it. However, PANPA elects to await the leadership of the Senate committee on this matter. Be assured, there would be no opposition to a mandatory industry code of practice under the Trade Practices Act. PANPA comes to this conclusion, believing the quality and substance of evidence from sporting bodies and their representatives gives the greatest cause for concern in relation to free speech, a free press and a public right to know about sports supported by the people of Australia, either personally or through taxpayer funds.

Recent fines applied to the Hawthorn President, Mr Jeff Kennett, and the Coach of Sydney Roosters, Mr Brad Fittler, for simply speaking their minds about their sport provides additional evidence of the control sporting organisations wish to exert over individuals and organisations.

We believe this desire to control free speech, to dictate terms to a free press, to exclude legitimate news organisations for a small commercial benefit that penalises the fans and the Australian public at large to be an alarming trend that, possibly, will not stop without some formal action on behalf of the citizens of our nation.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hollands
Chief Executive