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30 August 2023

By email

Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023

To The Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023. We are pleased to see efforts being made to address the damage caused by irresponsible media outlets on a legislative level. We make this submission in support of the spirit of the Bill with suggestions as to how it could be strengthened to uphold the rights of all people.

The South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance is a community run charity working for a LGBTIQ+ inclusive, healthy and safe South Australia. Our work fits into three distinct but overlapping categories:

- **Advocacy:** We advocate for decision-makers to make changes to improve LGBTIQ+ health and rights.
- **Community:** We create opportunities for LGBTIQ+ communities to take action on issues that matter to us.
- **Awareness:** We increase awareness of LGBTIQ+ experiences in the broader South Australian community.

We welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Bill with particular reference to the needs and rights of the LGBTIQ+ communities of South Australia.

Whilst South Australia has a number of online media sources that report on matters relevant to this state on a daily basis, there is only one daily physical newspaper widely circulated, and that is The Advertiser, a Murdoch owned entity. The South Australian Advertiser as it was first named, began in 1858, but in 1997, it shifted from being a broadsheet newspaper to being a tabloid.

It's hard to articulate just how damaging mainstream media often is to the LGBTIQ+ community, but I do not have to look too far back to note a specific front page edition of The Advertiser that publicly outed a gay man in Adelaide who also happens to be a church leader. The article entitled: 'Cash, sex and frock'n'roll' claimed that the priest was 'active on the homosexual meeting site Grindr, providing graphic depictions of sexual encounters and desires

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SARAA acknowledges and pays respects to the Kaurna, Nukunu and Ngarrindjeri people, whose land we operate and live on. Aboriginal land was stolen, never ceded, and we stand in solidarity with First Nations people, especially those who are also members of the LGBTIQ+, Brotherboy and Sistergirl communities.

with men and sending pornographic photos to potential dates'. The Advertiser also revealed that it had 'obtained surveillance video taken by a private investigator from a public street, which appears to show multiple males visiting his home at night, corresponding with chats on his Grindr account that invited them'. The article also contained a series of screenshots of private messages the priest had sent on Grindr, including one featuring his photo.

Coming out is a difficult enough thing for many people in our community, but particularly so for those people working in religious institutions. Publicly outing a person in this way is completely outrageous and there should be laws in place to prevent such things.

This is only one example of an article that was published on June 14th this year. The damage done to that individual is bad enough, the flow on effects from others in his church and the broader community is impossible to quantify. There are countless examples of similarly disgusting articles that have happened in the last 12 months, each one of them more damaging than the last.

These direct attacks on our community are unfortunately also supported by some people in parliament. The platform given to those espousing extremist views from a very small minority of the community in the name of 'balance' by Murdoch outlets, it is simply an excuse to start a culture war and sell newspapers. The impact this has, particularly on young people is devastating and without doubt contributes to the well documented poorer mental health outcomes that are prevalent in our community.

Additionally, attacks on the gender diverse community coming from the Murdoch media (not just in South Australia but globally) has increased significantly in recent years. Trans and gender diverse young people are significantly more likely to have suicidal thoughts than cisgendered people ([The lifetime prevalence of suicidal thoughts ranged from 64% among cisgender men to 90% among non-binary participants and 91% among trans men.](#)) The direct impact of mainstream media on this sector or our community who are already enduring significantly unfair treatment and having to access their personal resilience more frequently than most, is undeniable.

The current media regulatory framework is not fit for purpose and needs to be rewritten. In the interest of a healthy democracy, better quality journalism and public decency, we add our voice to the call for a Royal Commission into the Murdoch media's influence and control over our democracy and to fully examine the impact of media concentration in Australia.

Once again we thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Rebecca Galdies

she/her

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