

re Inquiry into the Provisions of the National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2004 and the National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2004

To the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee:

On behalf of John Fairfax Holdings Limited, publisher of The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Australian Financial Review, and other newspapers and magazines, in print and online, I wish to associate ourselves fully with the submission presented by the Australian Press Council on this legislation.

Fairfax respectfully urges the Committee to recommend adoption of the amendments suggested by the Press Council. They will improve the Bill without compromising its intent or effectiveness in protecting national security information and ensuring the proper administration of justice.

In recent years, the Government has frankly been indifferent to our requests for sensible amendments addressing these sensitive areas in several previous Bills. This is a cause of great concern to Fairfax and other media organisations. So while we appreciate the opportunity to comment on legislation, we also hope Members will support efforts to make legislation in the national security area more workable and accommodating of all the public policy interests involved.

We extend a hand of cooperation to you and hope your report will substantively reflect the issues presented by the Press Council. We stand ready to meet with Members of the Committee to discuss these issues and concerns as you prepare your report.

Sincerely,

Bruce C. Wolpe
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