



MEDIA RELEASE

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Assange extradition a dangerous assault on international journalism

The UK Government's decision to uphold the application by the US Department of Justice to extradite Australian publisher Julian Assange imperils journalists everywhere, says the union for Australia's journalists.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance calls on the Australian Government to take urgent steps to lobby the US and UK Governments to drop all charges against Assange and to allow him to be with his wife and children.

Assange, a MEAA member since 2007, may only have a slim chance of challenging extradition to face espionage charges for releasing US government records that revealed the US military committed war crimes against civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq, including the killing of two Reuters journalists.

If found guilty, Assange faces a jail term of up to 175 years.

MEAA Media section Federal President Karen Percy said: "We urge the new Australian government to act on Julian Assange's behalf and lobby for his release.

"The actions of the US are a warning sign to journalists and whistleblowers everywhere and undermine the importance of uncovering wrongdoing.

"Our thoughts are with Julian and his family at this difficult time."

In 2011 WikiLeaks was awarded the Walkley Award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism in recognition of the impact WikiLeaks' actions had on public interest journalism by assisting whistleblowers to tell their stories.

At the time the Walkley judges said WikiLeaks applied new technology to 'penetrate the inner workings of government to reveal an avalanche of inconvenient truths in a global publishing coup'.

This type of publishing partnership has been repeated by other media outlets since, utilising whistleblowers' leaks to expose global tax avoidance schemes, among other stories. In the WikiLeaks example, only Assange has been charged.

None of WikiLeaks media partners have been cited in any US government legal actions because of their collaboration with Assange.

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