



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, May 27, 2022

Kennedy Awards make right decision to cut ties with fake union

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance welcomes the decision of the Kennedy Awards not to proceed with a sponsorship arrangement with the 'Journalists First Inc' organisation.

MEAA and other media industry bodies have been concerned that a partnership with this organisation was inconsistent with an awards program dedicated to quality journalism and the pursuit of truth.

Journalists First Inc is a 'Red Union' which has appropriated the name of the Australian Journalists Association in an attempt to give itself credibility.

Journalists First Inc is run by a small group of Queensland-based conservative political operatives who have a background of supporting WorkChoices-style individual contracts and opposing penalty rates and awards.

Journalists First Inc:

- is not run by journalists;
- has no standing in industrial tribunals;
- does not have its accounts audited by independent regulators;
- has no history of advancing journalists' rights and interests.

The real AJA was established in 1910 and continues today as the Media section of MEAA, which proudly advocates for journalists and their working conditions and fights for press freedom.

MEAA is:

- a democratic body run by journalists elected by their fellow rank-and-file members;
- an industrial organisation registered with the Fair Work Commission;
- transparent in its operations including making its audited accounts available to the public in its annual report.

MEAA Media director Adam Portelli said the Kennedy Awards had done themselves a disservice by accepting a sponsorship from Journalists First Inc.

"Accepting a sponsorship from an anti-worker organisation that promotes a dangerous anti-vaccination agenda on its website has damaged the reputation of the Kennedy Awards," he said.

"We welcome the belated decision of the Kennedy Awards to cut ties with Journalists First Inc."

MEAA Media federal president Karen Percy said transparency and integrity were critical to the union which holds elections for officials and is subject to rigorous regulatory scrutiny.

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“I am proud to have been elected by my fellow journalists to represent them and be accountable as the head of their union and professional association,” she said.

“MEAA has a strong track record of advancing the industrial rights of our 5000-plus media members, including our freelance members.

“We promote ethical journalism, the importance of public interest journalism across Australia and we have advocated at home and abroad for press freedom.”

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