



**MEDIA RELEASE: Friday, March 16, 2018**

## **New espionage laws must exempt public interest journalism**

The union for Australian journalists will today deliver to a hearing of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security a petition of almost 9000 signatures opposing proposed new national security legislation.

The petition is addressed to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Attorney-General Christian Porter and calls on the Federal Government to withdraw the *National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017* because of its failure to protect journalists from prosecution.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance is among 14 media organisations calling for a full exemption from the legislation for public interest reporting.

“Despite further amendments to the Bill proposed by the Attorney-General, it still remains the case that this legislation will criminalise public interest reporting,” said MEAA chief executive Paul Murphy.

“This legislation has generated real community concern, as proven by the almost 9000 people who have signed our petition since it was launched last month.

“That public pressure has led to the Attorney-General making amendments to the Bill but they still do not go far enough to provide the protection required for journalists.

“The Bill still remains too broad in its scope, the defences for news media are still inadequate, and the penalties, including jail, are excessive.”

Mr Murphy will deliver the petition when he appears alongside representatives of other media organisations at a hearing of the Parliamentary Joint Committee in Melbourne today.

**When:** 10.45am, Friday, March 16, 2018

**Where:** Committee Room G7 and G8, 55 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne

**Media contact:** Mark Phillips, communications director – ph 0422 009 011; email [mark.phillips@meaa.org](mailto:mark.phillips@meaa.org)

**The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance - the people who inform and entertain**