



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Queensland Court's 'Journalist F' appeal decision another blow for press freedom

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, the union for Australia's journalists, is deeply concerned at the outcome in today's appeal hearing in the case involving "Journalist F" over his refusal to identify a confidential source, citing his ethical obligation to protect the source's identity.

Today's decision highlights the inadequacies of Queensland's approach to, and delayed acknowledgement of, the need for a journalist shield law.

MEAA's Queensland Regional Director Michelle Rae said: "This decision places a journalist at risk because Queensland has been slow to accept that journalists must not be prosecuted for doing their job. It's a principle known around the world that journalists can never reveal the identity of a confidential source. Every legal jurisdiction in Australia has introduced laws that shield journalists from prosecution for maintaining that ethical obligation – every Australian jurisdiction except Queensland. Now journalist 'F' looks as if he will pay the price."

"It is crucial that the Queensland Government's proposed shield law includes protections for journalists reporting on crime and corruption."

MEAA has spent more than 20 years campaigning for shield laws that protect journalists and has also called for adequate protection for whistleblowers who often seek to confidentially expose wrongdoing and illegality.

MEAA Media Director Adam Portelli said: "There are variations in shield laws across Australia's jurisdictions and it's vital Queensland retains the Crime and Corruption Commission within the scope of its proposed law. Otherwise, how are the powerful to be held to account?"

"Australia needs a uniform national shield law regime that guarantees no journalist goes to jail for reporting the truth.

"Journalists don't get to choose; they have to protect their confidential sources' identity in all circumstances.

"If we believe in open democracy then public interest journalism must be able to scrutinise the powerful and uphold the community's right to know what our governments do in our name."

MEAA will examine the court's findings when they are released on Monday.

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