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Selectively banning media is an attack on press freedom

The exclusion of an ABC news team from One Nation's election night function in Perth on Saturday is unacceptable and must not be repeated, says the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the union and industry advocate for Australia's journalists.

MEAA chief executive officer Paul Murphy said it was essential for public interest journalism that all accredited media outlets be given unrestricted access to political events, media conferences, business annual general meetings, and other public events.

He said MEAA was deeply concerned at any attempts by political parties or other public organisations to ban individual outlets or journalists because they did not like how they reported on them.

According to reports, the ABC was the only outlet denied access to the One Nation function on Saturday night.

Murphy said this was not the first instance of a media outlet being singled out for a ban by a political party unhappy with the coverage it has received.

He said journalists from The Australian newspaper had been treated similarly by the Palmer United Party in 2014, and there were other examples over the years.

"The exclusion of the ABC team on Saturday night is a disturbing development and we note that the ABC is yet to receive a proper explanation from One Nation," Murphy said.

"MEAA agrees with the ABC that denying it normal access to political events for simply doing its job, is an attack not just on the public broadcaster but on the fundamental role of the media in a democracy.

"There has been understandable outrage at the Trump administration's vendetta against CNN, The New York Times and several other outlets in the US, and what happened in Perth on Saturday night shows we must be just as vigilant about press freedom here in Australia."

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

📍 PO Box 723 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 📞 1300 656 513

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ABN 84 054 775 598