



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Senate media inquiry must consider multiple challenges facing the industry

A new Senate inquiry into Australia's media is a welcome opportunity to address many of the issues confronting public interest journalism in this country, says the union for Australian journalists.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance has consistently called for greater diversity of ownership in our media industry, which is one of the most concentrated in the democratic world. Greater diversity would allow for a wider variety of voices to be heard and would better serve our communities.

Many of the issues raised by this inquiry have been examined by parliamentary and other inquiries in recent years, including the role of digital platforms and the future of public interest journalism. MEAA believes that the changing circumstances forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the dramatic decline in media revenues, the impact of social media platforms, and the challenges of reporting regional issues such as the recent bushfires, demand a fresh look at the challenges facing the media industry.

MEAA looks forward to contributing to this new Senate inquiry and lending our expertise on the role of public interest journalism, concentration of media ownership, the impact of digital platforms, and the role the MEAA *Journalist Code of Ethics* should play in ensuring responsible journalism.

"There is great disquiet in the community about the state of our media which has been heightened by the reliance on accurate and independent public interest journalism during the bushfires and COVID-19," said MEAA Media Federal President Marcus Strom.

"This inquiry is timely and we hope it will be the start of rebuilding trust around public interest journalism.

"At present we are suffering a narrow ownership base, a crisis of integrity with the public and a weak regulatory environment. The financial crisis – accelerated by COVID – has further reduced diversity in media ownership. And it has further reduced the resources available to adequately fund a robust, independent media landscape.

"This has produced immense workplace stress on our members who are dedicated to reporting news in the public interest. Alongside this is a heightened hyperpartisanship that is undermining public confidence in journalism.

"The Senate must consider these matters in its review and we look forward to contributing."

More information: Mike Dobbie, 0401 730 195 or mike.dobbie@meaa.org

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

BUILT ON INTEGRITY. POWERED BY CREATIVITY. MEAA.ORG

ABN 84 054 775 598