

SPECIAL ALLIANCE BULLETIN: 18/04/2008

Alliance seeks to end WA media ban

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

The Media Alliance has called on The West Australian newspaper to publicly endorse the journalists' Code of Ethics in a bid to end its dispute with the WA Government over ethical reporting standards. The Government has blacklisted West reporters from press conferences and media releases since February, when WA Attorney-General Jim McGinty branded the newspaper's reporting as "unethical".

Alliance branch secretary Michael Sinclair-Jones said respect for truth and the public's right to know were fundamental principles of journalism. The unprecedented ban on journalists was unwarranted.

In a West interview on Tuesday, Sinclair-Jones said the newspaper could help resolve the issue by publishing the Code and committing publicly to its principles. So far there has been no response or action from the newspaper. "This dispute is all about ethical reporting and it is a chance for the newspaper to set the record straight, to show publicly that the ban is unwarranted," Sinclair-Jones said. "If would also give readers a chance to judge for themselves over who is right."

Sinclair Jones said the Government must cease gratuitous public attacks on West and Sunday Times journalists for doing their job properly adding that all WA news media should commit to the Code's ethical reporting standards.

"Free speech and ethical journalism are essential for a fair and democratic society to operate effectively," he said. "As World Press Freedom Day approaches next week, we must strive to protect the vital role of a free and unfettered press in civil society, and be always mindful of the responsibility this places on journalists."

The Media Alliance represents more than 10,000 journalists across Australia



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