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Alliance Welcomes ALP Free Speech Policy

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



The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance commends Labor for policy put forth at its National Conference to bolster and protect freedom of the press.

Following concerted lobbying from the Alliance, Labor has agreed to amend its privacy and free speech platform to include the following protections:

- Legislate for proper Freedom of Information laws that enable Australians to access appropriate information about government activities
- Implement the ALRC recommendations on sedition laws
- Provide shield laws for protecting confidential sources and genuine protection for whistleblowers
- Review laws to decriminalise reporting of matters of public interest

“We congratulate the opposition for taking a strong stance on press freedom, and putting the public interest rightfully ahead of unchecked political power,” said Alliance federal secretary Chris Warren.

“The past 12 months have seen a continuation of the steady erosion of the freedom of our press, as detailed in **Official Spin**, our report released last week. Labor has shown it is unafraid to take the practical measures needed to restore the public’s faith in government respect for freedom of expression and transparency.”

Official Spin: Censorship and Control of the Australian Press 2007 highlights FoI, sedition, protection of whistleblowers and shield laws for journalists as areas where press freedom is suffering, and where there is pressing need for legislative review.

The ALP has committed to prohibit the use of telecommunications interception and listening devices unless approved by judicial warrant or subject to appropriate administrative review, backing Alliance concerns over ASIO phone-tapping.

It will also uphold uniform defamation laws to “ensure a proper balance between freedom of expression, public debate and the protection of the reputation of others”. The Alliance successfully lobbied for the introduction of uniform defamation laws last year.

Official Spin is available online at www.alliance.org.au

The Alliance is also proud to announce the appointment of a Press Freedom Committee, a leadership group to report and lobby on press freedom issues. Officially named on Friday, the group comprises:

Kate Legge, Chris Masters, Dominique Schwartz, Peter Nichol森, Mark Riley, Garry Linnell, Colleen Egan, Neil Breen, Gay Alcorn, George Williams, David Marr, Matthew Moore, Laura Tingle, Andrew Mearns, Hedley Thomas, Karen Middleton and Max Uechtritz

We thank them for their commitment and support.

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

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