



The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP
Premier of Queensland
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Brisbane, QLD 4000
thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

The Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
1 William Street
Brisbane, QLD 4000
attorney@ministerial.qld.gov.au

cc. Katarina Carroll APM
Queensland Police Commissioner
Queensland Police Service
GPO Box 1440
Brisbane, QLD 4001

23 July 2019

Dear Premier and Attorney-General,

Re: arrest and charging of French TV crew at Abbot Point

MEAA is the union and professional association of Australia's journalists. We write to express our concern at the arrest of four French TV journalists yesterday at Abbot Point terminal while they were reporting on a protest being conducted at the site.

MEAA believes their arrest, detention, charges and bail conditions are an outrageous assault on press freedom. Journalists should be allowed to carry out their duties reporting on a matter of public interest without being arrested and charged.

We understand that the crew did not understand they were trespassing on a railway line that was private property while they were filming and reporting on the protest. When Queensland police personnel approached them and asked who they were, the TV crew duly presented their French Government-issued *Carte d'identité des journalistes professionnels* that clearly identifies them as professional journalists. It seems their press cards were ignored, with one of the police saying to them: "Journalists should know better."

They were told they were obstructing the railway and were then arrested, placed in handcuffs and put into police vehicles.

The French journalists say they were not asked to move on. They say they did not refuse to comply with any requests made by the police... because the police made no requests. They were then detained for seven hours and were subsequently charged with trespass.

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As one of the French journalists has subsequently explained: “In France you have right to film in the streets ... even though you film the protests you are not part of the protest yourself, you are a journalist, you do your job and make the report, that’s just life.”

Remarkably, their bail conditions ban the crew from being within 20 kilometres of Adani’s Carmichael mine site and less than 100 metres from any other Adani site. It is egregious that journalists should be subject to a total exclusion zone that curtails their right to report and only further infringes on the public’s right to know.

At a time when Australia’s reputation as a nation that upholds press freedom is already damaged, the actions of Queensland Police have only gone to attract more unwelcome attention. The actions of Queensland Police were heavy-handed and unworthy of a healthy functioning democracy that upholds press freedom.

MEAA urges that the charges against our colleagues be dropped and that they be allowed to report without the restrictive conditions that have been placed upon them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Murphy', with a stylized, cursive script.

Paul Murphy
Chief executive