



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, October 6, 2023

Media union condemns WA police demand for footage

The union for Australian journalists is alarmed at reports that Western Australian police are demanding the ABC hand over footage featuring climate activists filmed as part of an investigative television documentary that has yet to air.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance condemns the demands by WA police for footage from an upcoming *Four Corners* documentary, which are understood to have been issued via the 'Order to Produce' provisions of the *WA Criminal Investigations Act*. The law compels organisations to comply.

'Escalation: Climate, protest and the fight for the future' is due to be broadcast on *Four Corners* on Monday night and focuses on the Burrup Peninsula in northern Western Australia and the "increasingly combative confrontation between protesters and the state", according to the program's website.

The protest group 'Disrupt Burrup Hub' is featured in the program and has objected to the action by WA's counter-terror police, the State Security Investigations Group, fearing the footage might identify some of its activists.

MEAA, which represents more than 5000 journalists and other media workers across Australia, is concerned that the Order to Produce rides roughshod over a journalist's obligations to protect sources.

"We urge the ABC to stand firm and not hand over the footage," said MEAA Media Federal President Karen Percy.

"This is a direct threat to press freedom and the ability of investigative journalists to cover this important story.

"Protecting sources is sacrosanct for journalists. To reveal sources is contrary to the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics.

"This law is an outrageous over-reach and the WA Police should not proceed with this action."

"It's ironic that a story looking at the extreme measures being used by the powerful to shutdown climate activism, is itself under threat by extreme measures."

More information: Mark Phillips, 0422 009 011 or mark.phillips@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