



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Queensland shield laws will enhance right to know

Queenslanders' right to know will be enhanced by the passage of journalist shield laws through the state's parliament.

The new laws, which were passed on Tuesday, are the culmination of many years of campaigning by members of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance in Queensland.

This will bring Queensland into line with the rest of Australia in protecting journalists who abide by their ethical responsibility not to reveal their sources.

The acting Director of MEAA Media, Michelle Rae, said shield laws allow journalists to claim legal privilege in order to protect a confidential source.

Without this protection, whistleblowers are more reluctant to come forward, and the public's right to know is diminished, she said.

"The passage of this legislation by the Queensland Parliament is hugely welcome," she said.

"Queensland – more than any other state – knows how important investigative journalism is to clean out government corruption and restore democracy.

"Journalists are not above the law, but shield laws recognise the important role of public interest journalism in our democracy.

"The protection of sources is a fundamental responsibility for ethical journalism recognised the world over, and no journalist should ever risk going to jail for standing by their Code of Ethics.

"Shield laws will give whistleblowers confidence that when they provide information to a journalist, their identity will be protected.

"It is particularly welcome that these new protections extend to Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission hearings, and we urge other state and territories to adopt a similar approach."

Ms Rae paid tribute to a Queensland journalist, who cannot be named, who was facing prosecution for refusing to reveal the identity of a confidential source to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

"Their courage and their commitment to remain true to their ethics is an inspiration to us all," she said.

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