

# Regional news brands unite for Australia's right to know

**Media Release**

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## **REGIONAL NEWS BRANDS UNITE FOR AUSTRALIA'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

News Corp Australia's regional news brands have today joined as one with a powerful new front page highlighting increasing excessive secrecy by governments to stop journalists from telling the public what they are doing.

The front page telling governments 'Not to Keep Us in the Dark' was published throughout regional Queensland, NSW, the Northern Territory and Victoria. In Hobart, *The Mercury* also produced a front page exposing local government secrecy.

The local news brands joining in the campaign come from Bundaberg, Grafton, the Sunshine Coast, Northern Star, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Warwick, Darwin, Gladstone, the Gold Coast, Mackay, Ipswich, Gympie, Toowoomba, Geelong, Hobart, Toowoomba, Geelong, Hobart, Lismore and Coffs Harbour.



The move forms part of Australia's Right to Know campaign by major media organisations targeting growing government overreach to stop journalists informing the public of matters of public interest.

It is the second time in the past month News Corp Australia's regional news brands have published a front page dedicated to informing their readers of how governments - local, state and federal - are denying them the right to know many decisions and actions they have taken.

Today's coverage was supplemented with examples of this excessive secrecy throughout regional Australia and demonstrated how authorities are increasingly seeking to thwart public scrutiny of their activities.

This secrecy - across all levels of government - has seen Australia branded the most secretive democracy in the world.

Commenting on today's regional newspapers' front pages, News Corp Australasia executive chairman Michael Miller said: "These front pages send a powerful message that Australia's media is standing up for the rights of all regional Australians to know what their governments are doing.

"The Right to Know campaign is important for our industry as a whole but it's much more than that.

"Governments of all levels - local, state and federal - too often exploit what they perceive as a lack of scrutiny outside of mainland capital cities to take questionable decisions and actions.

"It's our commitment in serving the communities where all of us live and work that we keep these governments honest and at every turn, fight their increasing secrecy.

"Regional Australians should know about decisions that affect them."

Australia's Right To Know coalition of media organisations is demanding the federal government reverse these intrusions on your rights by amending laws to:

- Allow the right to contest applications for warrants on journalists or news outlets;
- Amend national security laws to ensure journalists cannot be jailed for simply doing their jobs;
- Ensure legitimate public-sector whistleblowers are adequately protected;
- Have new legislation that defines and restricts what information can be kept secret; and
- Review Freedom of Information and defamation laws.