



## MEDIA RELEASE

### FREEDOM OF THE PRESS MUST BE PROTECTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

This morning's Federal Police raid on the ABC is most disturbing and follows an earlier raid on a NewsCorp journalist's home in Canberra.

ABC Friends National has called on Communications Minister Paul Fletcher to discuss the circumstances of both interventions in Australian media reporting to clearly demonstrate his government's commitment to freedom of the press.

Australian journalists and media organisations cannot be intimidated in this way as such interference creates a police state mentality where essential information is not available to the public.

Clearly there are some people who believe that so called "security issues" overwhelm the public's right to know, but open access to government information is a fundamental principle for any democracy. Australia has always criticised those totalitarian regimes where governments control the information their citizens can access.

ABC Friends will discuss these raids with the Minister for Communications and the ABC Parliamentary Friends Group when the Australian Parliament sits in July.

ABC Friends National President Margaret Reynolds said the AFP needed to publicise what protocols were in place to protect the "public interest" in such circumstances.

#### Margaret Reynolds

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Margaret Reynolds'.

**President**  
**ABC Friends National Inc.**

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