

Wednesday 4 June 2019

Second AFP raid in two days on media a disturbing threat to press freedom

The peak body for working people condemns two raids on journalists and media organisations by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in 24 hours.

The AFP raid of ABC offices and three of its staff today is both a disturbing Government attack on press freedom and highlights the need for strong protections for whistle-blowers in the public and private sectors, in this case in the *Afghan Files* series.

Journalism relies on being able to protect sources that are shedding light on secretive practices and poor behaviour by governments and businesses. A journalists' code of ethics prevents them from revealing their sources.

The ABC raid is alarming and seriously threatens journalists' ability to properly publicly scrutinise matters of national security and defence.

The union movement experienced a disgraceful abuse of state power in 2017, when an office of working people's representatives were raided by representatives of the Registered Organisations Commission and the AFP.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien

"Two raids in just 24 hours on journalists and news organisations is a serious impingement on the freedom of press in Australia.

"It is outrageous that more than two years after a story was reported, but just weeks after a federal election result, the AFP are now raiding the ABC's offices.

"We cannot allow police raids of working journalists and news organisations in Australia to become the norm.

"These raids are designed to intimidate journalists and media organisations and hunt down sources that reveal what governments are doing.

"These raids also come at a time when the public's right to know is crucial."

Media contact: Kate Shuttleworth 0447 418 726; ACTU Media: 03 9664 7315