

## THE AUSTRALIA'S RIGHT TO KNOW CAMPAIGN

*Reporters Sans Frontieres*

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Paris, France: Reporters Without Borders hailed a campaign called Australia's Right to Know that was launched today by a coalition of leading Australian news media including News Ltd, Fairfax, ABC and SBS with the aim of combating the erosion of press freedom resulting from the country's legislation.

At a news conference to launch the campaign, News Ltd chairman John Hartigan cited the Reporters Without Borders and Freedom House press freedom indexes, which put Australia far behind such countries as New Zealand and Canada.

"As Australians we like to see ourselves as free people," Hartigan said. "Regrettably, we see that the right to speak and say has been under significant threat over very many years. We find that a lot of Australians aren't being given the information to make informed decisions."

According to Australia's Right to Know, access to information is restricted by more than 500 legal provisions.

As examples, Hartigan said News Ltd journalists were recently denied access to information contained in an audit of politicians' expenses, a list of restaurants sanctioned by the health authorities, and a ranking of hospitals according to the quality of their medical care.

Fairfax chief executive David Kirk said the Australian media had united in support of the campaign in an exemplary manner.

Reporters Without Borders said: "We appeal to the federal and provincial authorities to respond to the media's concerns as quickly as possible and to relax the laws and regulations limiting press freedom and the right to information in Australia."

The Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index ranked Australia 35th out of 168 countries.

Source: [http://blogs.smh.com.au/newsblog/archives/freedom\\_of\\_information/013358.html](http://blogs.smh.com.au/newsblog/archives/freedom_of_information/013358.html)  
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