



geelongchamberofcommerce

Connections Education Information Advocacy

18th March 2013

Mr Darren Cheeseman MP
Federal Member for Corangamite
Shop 3, 195 – 203 Colac Rd
WAURN PONDS VIC 3216

Dear Darren

Public Interest Media Advocate Bill 2013

On behalf of the more than 650 members of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, we write to strongly oppose the appointment of a Public Interest Media Advocate, as proposed by your Government under the Public Media Interest Advocate Bill 2013 which is currently before parliament.

Just as we opposed the establishment of a News Media Council for several reasons including the risk of reducing freedom of speech, potential interference by government in the freedom of the press, and restriction of self-regulation, so we oppose this new move for similar reasons.

Mr Albanese's statement that "This bill offers a simple and effective way to **strengthen the self-regulatory framework** for significant providers of print and online news **free of government interference** and for the benefit of the Australian public" seems to cloud the potential risks emanating from the proposed appointment.

Under the bill, we understand that the advocate can remove the Australian Press Council if he/she believes it is not regulating the media satisfactorily.

We believe that the current self-regulatory system is working well in the public interest and does not require government regulation.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce therefore requests that the Bill be withdrawn immediately.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sanders
President

Bernadette Uzelac
Executive Officer