

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/ Madam ,

I supply the answers in response to questions that I have taken on Notice during my submission 12th March 2020 at the Senate Inquiry into Media Diversity in Australia. I have also supplied my employment contracts 2011, 2014 and 2020 which refer to the monitoring of Communications devices.

Questions on Notice

1) Senator KIM CARR: When we talk about the role of the media in terms of fostering democratic values, social values, do you think this actually contributes to negative social attitudes as well?

Senator KIM CARR: What can we do about this? What can be done to address this issue

Question 1 response

1. The lack of diversity in the media has meant that News Corp behaves like a political party promoting politicians which reflect their business interests.
2. It has also led to a position where News Corp undermines the basic tenet of a fair contract with its employees.

My contract with the Cairns Post in 2019 states that “any implied contractual duty the Company has to act in “**good faith or reasonably is expressly excluded.**”

Employment Agreement: Anna Rogers and News Corp 6.12.2019

Clause : 28.1 Entire Agreement

The Agreement:

a) constitutes the entire agreement between you and the Company in relation to your employment and any implied contractual duty the company has to act in good faith or reasonably is expressly excluded from forming part of it.

News Corp's virtual monopoly of the print media in Queensland, meant that to work in the media I had to agree to the Company's terms which I believe are outside the democratic values of fair and honest dealings in contractual matters.

2. When the media portrays women in a particular way: for example

(Please refer to the screenshots of newspaper articles with images of women appearing in court in the folder of screenshots which is attached)

- women being given coverage because they are attractive rather than given coverage for what they are doing
- covering a court appearance based on the woman's looks and media following rather than the charges.
- highlighting a female politician's choice of clothes or haircut rather than speaking to her actions

This emphasis on attractive women reinforces the negative stereotypes of women's value being limited to how they look rather than the substance of what they are doing or saying.

This erodes the democratic values of equality by diminishing the role of women in their representation in Parliament, and other professional fields by holding them up to a sexist level of scrutiny which does not apply to their male colleagues.

This increased level of scrutiny makes it harder for women to enter politics and hold positions of influence .

2) Senator KIM CARR: Perhaps you'd like to consider what role we could take on in making recommendations in terms of regulation, education, training and advice that we could provide to newspapers and other media. Surely this is not just confined to the printed aspects of the media, is it?

Ms Rogers : I can only speak of my experience.

Senator KIM CARR: Again, what's your observation? Are these questions that are confined to newspapers?

Ms Rogers : I imagine, if you turn on the television, there are not many overweight, over-35 women on the television either.

Senator KIM CARR: Maybe it's advice we could tender to the union.

Ms Rogers : Possibly, I don't know.

Senator KIM CARR: Legal sanctions, is this an area you think we could canvass? If you would take it on notice, think about what legal sanctions are available. What sorts of things can we do in terms of recommendations the committee might be able to make, in your opinion?

Ms Rogers : Thank you, I will

Question 2 response:

With regards to education, regulation and training I believe that Australia should adopt the Finnish Information Literacy Program.

REF: The Guardian. 29.01.202 By Jon Henley

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/28/fact-from-fiction-finlands-new-lessons-in-combating-fake-news>

Whilst I have concentrated in the sexist portrayal of women by the media by News Corp in my submission, I believe the role of information in the future can either lead to a robust democracy, or as in the case that we have seen in America, a polarised society where citizens are pitted against each other, where neighbours become enemies.

You can legislate to make women's issues more prominent, but how would you enforce such a law. Similarly, how would you enforce legislation to give indigenous people a fair go or to portray cultural minorities fairly.

What we can do is educate people to recognise when they are being manipulated by information, to recognise bias and fake news.

If we can make people aware of bias or fake news then they can make informed choices about what they consume as news, whether it is in social media or broad stream news. (The Guardian 29.01.2020)

Finland has developed the model of a multi-platform information literacy and critical thinking model in schools since 2016. The goal is to aid citizens to be critical thinkers, fact check, interpreting and evaluating the information you receive, Whether it is from social media, mainstream media or face book.

If citizens are educated to see gender bias, to recognise fake news then they will read the article cautiously. You cannot legislate against ignorance, but you can educate and make people aware of when they are being manipulated.

The program in Finland was piloted by a 30-member, high level committee representing different bodies, from government Ministries, to welfare organisations, the police, intelligence and security service. It has trained thousands of civil servants, journalists, teachers and librarians. . (The Guardian 29.01.2020)

It gets the students to examine who produced the information and what is it based on: Is there evidence for it? Is it verifiable elsewhere?

There is also an independent fact checking service where journalists and researcher's fact check reports during elections and hold politicians to account for claims that they are making.(Ref : The Guardian 29.01.2020)

I believe a similar system should be set up in Australia to guard against news being used to manipulate communities. Whether it is the media's political bias, left or right wing, the sexist portrayal of women, or simply fake news.

Other steps that could be taken include:

Regulation & Legal sanctions:

A better enforcement of existing legislation and a review of the Journalists code of ethics to check that it is still current with changing technologies.

Work to eliminate the gender pay gap by requiring the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to audit companies and publish information showing companies who have gender pay discrepancies.

3) Chair : We've heard in other evidence about the depiction and the treatment of Julia Gillard when she was Prime Minister—not just the news articles and opinion pieces that were written about her but the photographs that were used, the cartoons that were drawn—and about the other women that the

Murdoch press would report on. Did you ever hear or were you ever directed in relation to the types of photographs that were taken of women that would sit alongside a critical news piece?

Ms Rogers : I'm not really sure. I'd have to take that on notice. I'd need to give it some consideration, if I could.

Answer question 3

I do not recall being directed to take a particular angle during a critical news event, but I am aware that if the victim or a perpetrator was attractive then the story would get a better run in the paper.

4) Senator FAWCETT: I want to very briefly touch on the issue of the disaster coverage that journalists do and the lack of support around trauma and post-traumatic stress. You may be aware that there is a growing concern around that. Cait McMahon, for, example, in 2016, published a paper through

The Swinburne University of Technology. In South Australia, one journalist in particular, is doing a PhD into that topic. In our terms of reference, we have catch-all at the end of 'any related matters' and in a similar vein to Senator Carr who indicated that this committee is an opportunity for members of

The public to communicate to the parliament, if there were measures that media organisations, and, in particular, your employer, could have taken that could have supported you better, in terms of preparation for, and support following, traumatic events, I'd invite you to consider putting something

further in writing to the committee as to those sorts of areas, because that may form part of what the committee may choose to publish in our recommendations.

Ms Rogers : I will do that. Thank you, Senator

Question 4 response

I believe there should be annual training for people working in the media with regards to:

- 1) How to deal with trauma they experience
- 2) How to deal with people who are the victims of trauma. (people they are interviewing and photographing)
- 3) Consideration of vicarious trauma for the community at large when reporting on traumatic events.

This could be modelled on the systems that have been put in place by the Police and Army who also deal with traumatic situations

I believe this should be delivered by an independent body so as to avoid the perception by employers that accessing such services is a weakness that can affect your employment prospects. .

There should also be access to independent clinical psychologists that employees can access after specific traumatic events.

5) Senator KIM CARR: Was it your view that *The Cairns Post*, for instance, did accurately reflect its community, in terms of photographic images that you were asked to produce?

Ms Rogers : Could I take that on notice?

Answer question 5:

There was an emphasis to concentrate on the wealthier suburbs of Cairns if you were doing a general story such as real estate, tourism, etc. This included a general directive to avoid the "M" suburbs of Mooroolbong, Manunda and Manoora which were seen as a poorer demographic.

The "M" suburbs also have the highest proportion of housing commission and indigenous residents. This was part of the focus on the younger, wealthier more attractive demographic.

6) Senator FAWCETT: I have one follow-up question. Just for the sake of balance, in your recollection, were there visits by members of other political parties who were ministers or, at times, the Prime Minister?

Ms Rogers : Not that I recall, but could I take that on notice, please?

Answer question 6:

I have attached the photos of the visit by Prime Minister's Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison to the Cairns Post Newsroom. (In the folder of images attached)

I do not recall any visit by Federal Labor leaders to the Cairns Post newsroom during my employment at the Cairns Post 2011-2020.

The Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch MP has told me that he has only visited the Cairns Post newsroom twice in 25 years. Once was with PM Tony Abbott in 2015 (Photos attached) and once was for a story about his portrait in the Archibald Prize.

Current State MP's have advised me that they have not visited the office and I do not recall a visit by the Premier in the last few years.

7) Senator KIM CARR: I'm thinking specifically about the situation in Cairns, given that Cairns is in a marginal seat. It attracts a lot of visiting politicians. You might have taken a lot of photographs, but did you note the way in which they were placed in the newspaper?

Ms Rogers : I'd like to take that on notice too, Senator

Answer question 7:

I am sorry but I am not able to make a valid comparison to the coverage of different politicians.

8) Chair: A journalist speaking to a confidential source would potentially have their phone listened to by management?

Ms Rogers: They've agreed to that in their contracts, I believe. I've had to agree to it in my contract. I believe it is across the board.

Chair : So, sources aren't actually protected at News Ltd then?

Ms Rogers: I guess so....can I check my contract

Chair: If you could check your contract that would be very helpful.

Senator KIM CARR: Can you provide that section to us ? That's covered under parliament privilege

Answer question 8:

I have provided complete copies of my employment contracts 2011, 2014 & 2020 in response to the question on notice. Following are the specific clauses that refer to Surveillance by News Corp contained in my employment contracts.

Employment Contract Anna Rogers and News Corp 15.07.2011 Clause 14

STANDARD TERMS

Clause 14: Workplace surveillance

14.1 The company notifies you that it carries out ongoing, intermittent surveillance of your use of computer and other electronic systems- including emails, internet and files (including files stored on your work computer).

14.2 The surveillance is carried out by all means available to the Company which may include:

- a) accessing your email account or emails.
- b) accessing your files.
- c) accessing your work computer, storage devices or communication devices.
- d) accessing records of internet usage by you (including sites and pages visited, files downloaded, video and audio files accessed and data input) and accessing those records; and
- e) use of monitoring and logging software

14.3 You acknowledge that your activities at work may be subject to ongoing intermittent and/or continuous tracking or camera surveillance and you agree to such surveillance. Some of the Company's workplaces are under camera surveillance. The security system installed allows tracking by recording when and where key card are used.

14.4 You agree to the surveillance referred to in this clause 14

14.5 If you are a new employee of the Company, the surveillance will be conducted from the commencement of your employment. Otherwise, the surveillance will have either already commenced (in accordance with an earlier notification of surveillance) or will commence 14 days after you receive this Agreement.

Employment Contract Anna Rogers and News Corp 10.07.2014

STANDARD TERMS

Clause 15: Workplace surveillance

15.1 The company notifies you that it carries out ongoing, intermittent surveillance of the use of computer and other electronic systems and communications systems by employees - including emails, internet and files

(including files stored on employees' work computers).

15.2 The surveillance is carried out by all means available to the Company which may include:

- a) accessing employees' email account or emails;
- b) accessing files and other information contained on employees' computers, storage devices or communication devices.
- c) accessing records of internet usage by employees (including sites and pages visited, files downloaded , video and audio files accessed and data input); and
- d) use of monitoring, logging and automatic alerting software and other specialised software

Employment Contract Anna Rogers and News Corp 06.12.2019

Clause 23: Workplace Surveillance

23.1 The Company notifies you that it carries out ongoing, intermittent surveillance of the use of computer and other electronic and communications systems by employees – including emails, internet and files (including files stored on employees' work computers).

23.2 The surveillance is carried out by all means available to the which may include:

- a) accessing employees' email accounts or emails.
- b) accessing files and other information contained on employees' computers, storage devices or communication devices.

- c) accessing records or internet usage by employees (including sites and pages visited, files downloaded , video and audio files accessed and data input); and
- d) use of monitoring, logging and automatic alerting software and other specialised software.

23.3 You agree that the surveillance will commence on the date of commencement of your employment under this agreement.

I believe the reference to communications systems refers to mobile and landline phones and that by agreeing to the terms of my contract, I was agreeing that my phone calls could be monitored at any time during my employment “ using all means available.”

A question must be asked as to why it has been left to a photographer to bring these issues to your attention. Why hasn't it been highlighted by the MEAA or the Press Council. Surely the bodies that govern media in Australia must have been aware of these clauses in the News Corp employment Agreement as they form part of the “Standard Terms” which must be signed by all journalists working for News Corp. They have formed part of the employment contracts of staff since at least 2011 to my knowledge.

Rupert Murdoch stated at the Leveson Inquiry in 2011 that phone tapping at News of the World was an “aberration”. Then why is the monitoring of phone calls still a standard practice at News Corp more than a decade later.

“This whole business at the News Of The World is a serious blot on my reputation” Mr Rupert Murdoch said on 26th April 2012 at the Leveson inquiry.

I also ask the question: Is it legal to monitor someone's phone by “any means available” and what about the consent of the person the journalist is speaking to?

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions in regards to my submission.