



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Science Party condemns recent escalating attacks on press freedoms in Australia.

Yesterday the Australian Federal Police raided the home of journalist Annika Smethurst regarding her 2018 report on Australia's surveillance capabilities, and today raided the ABC's Ultimo offices in response to 2017's "Afghan Files". 2GB presenter Ben Fordham was yesterday asked to reveal his sources for a story regarding turnbacks of asylum seeker boats.

Science Party leader Dr Andrea Leong said, "These efforts to strip Australians of the right to know what's being done in their name has no place in our democracy. The Australian people are owed an explanation for what's happening in their country right now."

"This authoritarian stranglehold on journalism will have a chilling effect on reporting on matters that are clearly in the public interest," she said.

These raids occurred against the backdrop of the cases of Julian Assange, Witness K, and Australian Taxation Office whistleblower Richard Boyle. They highlight the need for both whistleblower protections and a charter of rights to be enshrined in law, to better protect Australians against government overreach and to protect individuals who speak out against abuses of power.

The Science Party believes that our quality of life is improved primarily through technological developments, sourced through a scientific approach to knowledge in the context of democracy and peace.

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