

# AUSTRALIA'S RIGHT TO KNOW

April 12, 2009

Media release

## Fiji Censorship Condemned

The media coalition Australia's Right to Know today condemned the actions of Fiji's President who unilaterally overturned the constitution, sacked the judiciary and reappointed the head of the military as a so-called interim Prime Minister over the weekend.

The actions include a decree that has already allowed Fiji's military to stop publication or the broadcast of news about the country's state of emergency.

News Limited's Fiji Times has been censored since Saturday when representatives of the military moved into the newsroom to vet copy. Today's edition contains blank spaces where stories about the crisis would have appeared after they were rejected by the censor.

Fiji television news has also been censored with bulletins cut short as a result of items being censored by the Government in the past few days.

The latest round of censorship escalates recent threats to the media in Fiji. Recent attempts to intimidate the editor of the Fiji Times have included attacks on his home and his car.

The new managing director of the Fiji Times Anne Fussell is the third in less than a year after Evan Hannah, an Australian, was deported last year, followed by the deportation of his replacement, Rex Gardner earlier this year. The publisher of the Fiji Sun, Russell Hunter another Australian was also deported last year.

Right to Know says these latest "unparalleled, unprovoked and unwarranted moves to impose a military dictatorship in Fiji raise have significantly elevated concerns for the safety of all journalists in Fiji".

"International media was banned from attending the swearing in ceremony on Saturday of the interim Prime Minister and there are no signs that Fijians now have any reasonable access to independent media reports of the crisis now engulfing the country".

End

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