



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **This fascist crackdown is aimed at you!**

*The following release is the lead editorial of the 5 June Australian Alert Service. As it went to press the news of a raid on ABC headquarters in Sydney was breaking.*

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) raided the home of News Corp journalist Annika Smethurst on 4 June. They searched for evidence of leaked national security documents relating to her April 2018 story that the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) would be given power to spy on Australians.

STOP PRESS! As this AAS is being finalised, the AFP has just raided ABC studios in Sydney, over 2017 stories about Afghanistan.

Smethurst's original article reported that "emails, bank records and text messages of Australian citizens could be seen by digital spies" with ASD hackers allowed to covertly access data and compel both private sector and government bodies to assist them. Existing obligations to obtain warrants under the judicial oversight of the Attorney-General would be abolished. The need for the new powers was couched by the Home Affairs department in terms of stopping terrorism, child exploitation and transnational criminal activity occurring in the cyber domain—the exact justification for a [raft of new cyber controls passed by Five Eyes countries](#) (UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) over the last year. These include our own [Assistance and Access Act 2018 \(encryption laws\)](#) passed last December, which provided unprecedented new surveillance powers to Australia's intelligence agencies including the ASD, and the power to compel Australian citizens to assist them.

Put in the context of the treatment of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, and "Witness K" who revealed that the Australian government spied on the East Timorese cabinet during negotiations over an oil and gas treaty in 2004, the action against Smethurst is a marker of the rapid descent into a police state. The journalist who wrote up Edward Snowden's 2013 revelations about US National Security Agency (NSA) spying, Glenn Greenwald, tweeted: "There's a movement throughout the west to turn journalists who report on and publish classified information into criminals. This thuggish Australia [sic] search of Annika Smethurst's home is more evidence of that", adding that the Assange indictment is "the blueprint". That should shock reporters: [UN special rapporteur on torture Nils Melzer is calling Assange's treatment "psychological torture"](#).

The CEC uniquely warned of this situation. In 2000 Parliament passed the infamous "Shoot to Kill Bill", which authorised the Australian Defence Forces to use "lethal force" if "domestic violence" flared or if the "Commonwealth's interests" were threatened. Following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack, [in 2002-03 Australia adopted laws](#) allowing the Attorney General to ban any organisation at his discretion; giving ASIO the power to detain people for up to seven days incommunicado, with a reversed onus of proof, or *preventive* detention for 14 days; legitimising virtually unlimited surveillance; and many other powers concealed in amendments to existing criminal codes and terrorism, espionage and telecommunications interception laws. These powers were passed on the proviso of inbuilt "sunset clauses", but they were all made permanent in 2014. Further, an amendment to national security legislation passed in 2014 granted immunity from prosecution to officers of ASIO and its affiliates engaged in "special intelligence operations", but jail terms for reporters who publicise an ASIO operation. In the last year we have seen foreign interference laws, the encryption laws, and new internet censorship legislation passed after the Christchurch attack.

In 2002 News Ltd., Annika Smethurst's employer, wouldn't let the CEC use the word fascist to describe these laws in the headline of a [12 June 2002 full-page ad in the Australian](#) which warned the laws were equivalent to the Emergency Decrees which preceded Hitler's dictatorship. News Ltd. changed "fascist" to "draconian". Now fascism has touched one of their own, proving the CEC right.

These laws have done nothing to stop terrorism, as that wasn't their purpose. We are on a collision course with a new financial meltdown in which, for the financial establishment to maintain control —[including to steal your savings to keep the banking system afloat](#)—nothing short of fascist police-state measures will work.

[Click here to sign the new petition to the Australian Parliament: Hands off our bank deposits—stop 'bail-in'!](#)

