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## **WHY IS THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA BEING SO OBSTRUCTIVE? WHAT ARE THEY AFRAID OF?**

The Preamble to the 'Charter for a Free Press in Australia' states -

"Freedom of opinion and expression is an inalienable right of a free people. Australia is committed to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 of the Declaration provides: "Everyone has the right of freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

In a truly democratic society open debate, discussion, criticism and dissent are central to the process of generating informed and considered choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities and help in assessing and finding solutions to social, economic and political problems.

A free press is a symbol of a free people. The people of Australia have a right to freedom of information and access to differing opinions and declare that the following principles are basic to an unfettered flow of news and views both within Australia and across the nation's borders."

In our mail out to NIPD registered supporters on Thursday morning we advised that the Commonwealth had selectively silenced freedom of speech on Norfolk Island; and that the Commonwealth had used its powers under the Norfolk Island Broadcasting Act to remove from local radio notices an NIPD community announcement being aired on Radio Norfolk. It was claimed that the notice was "political" and "sectorial".

Our announcement related to –

- the Flag Raising Ceremony at the NIPD Centre for Democracy that afternoon (to be reported on next week);
- the refusal of a one-on-one meeting between NIPD and Minister Fletcher; and
- encouragement of the community to attend the meeting with Minister Fletcher and challenge the lack of democratic process relating to the current and future governance arrangements for Norfolk Island

Last Friday Members of the NIPD Management Committee (Chris, Geoff, Lisle and Andre) spoke to the community on Radio Norfolk and told the community they would be doing this on a weekly basis each Friday.

NIPD has today been advised of further new directions issued to the Radio Manager by the Commonwealth appointed Executive Director regarding Radio Norfolk's programming policy that –

**"all interviews are to be pre-recorded, unless otherwise agreed. Interviews will be reviewed through the office of the Executive Director and I, as Manager, will then be advised of their suitability for broadcast."**

This new policy would seem to be a new interpretation of an existing (draft) policy specifically designed to selectively silence freedom of speech on Norfolk Island.

In response NIPD has today formally requested that we be offered a weekly live broadcast time-slot that offers radio listeners the opportunity to phone in live or email questions relating to the Goals and Objectives of the Norfolk Island People for Democracy, an unincorporated association committed to educating the Norfolk Island People on their rights at law.

In this regard we have extended the opportunity for Mr Gesling to include a person with a countervailing or alternative view of his choice to join us 'on air'.

We will keep you informed.

**From the NIPD Management Committee**  
[www.norfolkschoice.com](http://www.norfolkschoice.com)