Australian Newspapers Redacted Their Front Pages for Press Freedom

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Daily newspapers in Australia had a powerful way of showing their advocacy for press freedom—by not showing everything. The front pages on Monday were heavily redacted in a stunt to show the need for independent reporting.

Australia's Right to Know, a coalition of media organizations and advocacy groups that was established about a decade ago, led the effort. The stunt was widely circulated online under the hashtag #RightToKnow. Publications including The Daily Telegraph, The Australian and The Australian Financial Review participated.

The dailies have criticized the government's handling of releasing information to the public, including the amount of agricultural land sold to foreign nations and data related to how nursing homes treat its elderly patients, Sky News reported.

Over the last twenty years, the country's governments have passed about 75 laws as they relate to secrecy and spying, according to the group. Furthermore, the group claimed that 87% of Australians value a free and transparent democracy government, but only 37% believe that is how government is functioning.

It's not the first time newspapers have used their front pages for advocacy purposes. The Grand Prix in this year's Print and

Publishing category at Cannes went to Impact BBDO Dubai, which redesigned An-Nahar, a newspaper in Lebanon, to have a blank front page to draw attention to civic conversation coming to a pause after elected officials did not form a government for an extended period of time.

In the United States, press freedom remains at a crucial period where most consumers think so-called “fake news” hasn’t been solved. The Newseum, the museum which displays front pages everyday and is devoted to celebrating press freedoms and honoring those who have fallen in the line of work, is closing at the end of the year.

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