



# TRANS

## MEDIA WATCH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Charity responds to the Leveson Report**

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### **Leveson Inquiry participant Trans Media Watch welcomes recommendations**

Trans Media Watch (TMW), the charity that works to improve media coverage of transgender (trans) and intersex issues, today welcomed the recommendation for an independent regulator with statutory underpinning made in the Leveson Report. “We are particularly pleased by the recommendation that current editors should not sit on the board, removing the conflict of interest at the heart of the current system,” said TMW Chair Jennie Kermode.

In the first of its two written submissions to the Inquiry, TMW called for a press ombudsman to be established in order to ensure that ordinary members of the public can access justice. It therefore welcomes Lord Justice Leveson's recommendation for a formally recognised, free arbitration system. TMW has worked with many vulnerable people who have been unable to obtain redress for press intrusion and harassment under the existing system. None of these people have been celebrities, yet their private lives and sometimes even their medical histories have been made the subject of salacious stories, turning their lives upside down.

In his Report, Lord Justice Leveson refers to TMW's submissions as evidence of “disturbing and intrusive reporting,” going on to say that “it is clear that there is a marked tendency in a section of the press to fail to treat members of the transgender and intersex communities with sufficient dignity and respect... parts of the tabloid press continue to seek to 'out' transgender people notwithstanding its prohibition in the Editors' Code.”

TMW appreciates concerns about the freedom of the press and is glad to be in accord with journalists represented by the NUJ. It welcomes the Report's support for a conscience clause to increase the freedom of individual journalists by empowering them to refuse to write stories they feel are at odds with their professional principles.

In preparing for the Inquiry, TMW met with representatives of several other minority groups routinely misrepresented in the press. It welcomes Lord Justice Leveson's recommendation that a new regulatory body should consider the protection of such minorities a matter of priority. TMW feels strongly that a mechanism is required for challenging the misrepresentation of groups even where individuals are not mentioned.

“The abuses of press freedom considered by the Inquiry have damaged the reputation of journalism as well as the lives of individuals,” said Jennie Kermode. “It is time to rebuild trust and improve standards for everyone's sake. Nobody should have to live in fear of being outed by the press and ridiculed over private medical matters. Families should not have to fear this happening to their children. The victims of violent crimes should not be the subject of innuendo just because they were trans. Today should be a moment for the industry to take stock and to move forward with a renewed sense of responsibility and purpose. Let journalism be about speaking truth to power, not about exploiting the powerless.”

Find out more:

<http://www.transmediawatch.org>

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