



Reporters barred from Shorten speech

The national journalists' union has complained to the ACTU over the exclusion of reporters from its national congress dinner in Brisbane, which prevented them from covering a speech by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten.

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance put out a statement saying journalists had also had restricted access to other events at the congress.

Media section president Marcus Strom said: "This is the first time anyone can recall journalists being excluded from the Congress dinner.

"It is particularly absurd as journalists are being locked out while attendees are inside live tweeting and posting to social media.

"The ACTU is an important organisation. A speech to the ACTU delivered by the alternative prime minister is an important event. The exclusion of journalists trying to do their job should not have happened and it shouldn't happen ever again."

Several industrial relations reporters, including those representing the *Herald*, had been ex-

cluded after travelling from interstate to report on the congress.

ALP president Wayne Swan was repeatedly asked about why journalists were locked out of the dinner during a press conference at the ACTU congress yesterday.

The first time he was asked, he said: "I'm not aware of those arrangements". Asked how he "felt"

about the journalists being locked out, he said: "I back my leader all the way".

Senior Labor frontbencher Anthony Albanese was also asked why the media was locked out of Bill Shorten's speech.

"I have no idea," Mr Albanese said.

An ACTU spokeswoman said: "The Congress dinner was a private ticketed event for delegates and was not open to the media."

Steve Knott from the Australian Resources and Energy Group posted this message on Twitter: "Note to IR comrades from the fourth estate: You are always welcome at AMMA dinners + they are far more informative + much more fun".

Anna Patty