

## **BUDGET SUBMISSION**

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### **SUMMARY**

The ABC needs to be funded with secure five and 10 year funding. The LNP has been defunding the ABC since Joe Hockey's 2014 budget six years ago and Morrison's 2017 budget. I am sick of losing quality journalism and in-depth coverage of ABC news, current affairs, dramas and education.

The ERC has got to stop defunding the ABC. Abbott promised 'no cuts to the ABC or SBS' prior to winning the 2013 election but went berserk cutting funding after being elected.

Restore indexation and make up the losses incurred to date to the ABC.

### **WHY SHOULD ABC FUNDING BE MAINTAINED AND EXPANDED**

*Question:* Why should the public or any Government maintain such public broadcasting and journalism?

*Answer:* The ABC is one of the few genuinely open public spaces for the community to really come together and argue their case for their view of public governance in Australia.

Other commercial media organisations have aligned their businesses to particular sector interests and this has effectively undermined the broader public trust and engagement on those forums for a real contestable dialogue about how the country should function.

Real community leaders distinguish themselves by successfully winning public debates in such open forums consolidating and achieving recognition of their leadership capacity providing real acceptance and confidence in their overall governance.

If the perception of media and communications is that it is little more than propaganda, trust in governance and institutions will quickly erode and lead to real debasement of societal well-being as seen in other countries.

Confident leaders, politicians and Governments profit from robust energised public broadcasting that legitimises their governance.

Diminished open forums such as the ABC erode the Government's own legitimacy and the public's ongoing trust that Government is focussed on the wider community's overall good.

## **RESTORE FUNDING**

The ABC needs to be funded appropriately without commercial stations being given handouts by the LNP for spurious requests.

## **TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION COSTS**

These are part and parcel of the ABC's work. Without signals being transmitted no-one can access the ABC but ABC funding is not indexed. Transmission costs are indexed.

This creates an enormous disparity when allocating funds. Transmission costs are approximately \$185 million pa including long-term contracts to 2035. About \$18 million extra each year has to be allocated to Transmission and Distribution costs. That is why cutting indexation has been one of many disasters for the ABC.

The only growth in announced funding is because of prior ABC and Government commitments to the private transmission network operator.

What is new and unfunded is imposing new transmission obligations on the ABC by asking it to takeover self-help services eg RBAH, without providing any additional funding. This means the ABC must further cut funding of content, including news, education and drama to meet externally imposed additional real costs.

Industry operating costs are rising faster than inflation due to the use of emerging information technology solutions to provide more efficient signal compression and content distribution in the longer term.

This is a further constraint on real program making budgets.

## **MEDIA REFORM GREEN PAPER**

This sets out to give support to the commercial stations but the government is starving the ABC of funds to the tune of \$48 million by denying indexation.

Commercial stations are quick to say how they are important to the community but cry poor when any regulation is mooted for them. In a free enterprise market they should stand or fall on their merits and not be given government handouts when the ABC is short-changed.