

# Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of Australia’s national broadcasters

## Submission – Anonymous 25 (22 June 2018)

### Question 8: Considering the commercial activities of the national broadcasters (e.g. where they are selling or purchasing goods and services), is there evidence that they have taken undue advantage of their government ownership, to the detriment of competitive outcomes?

### There is no evidence of this.

### By reducing funding to the national broadcasters, the government is, in fact, forcing them to sell goods and services to stay afloat. However, that does not imply any undue advantage.

### Properly funded national broadcasters are vital for the wellbeing of our country and our democracy. Their independence should be supported to as great an extent as possible, and not undermined by petty political point-scoring.

### Just because a national broadcaster does a particular thing doesn't mean that it is in any way hurting competition or their competitors.

### Question 9: What is the differential impact of regulation on commercial and national broadcasters, and is there evidence of consequent adverse impacts on competition and outcomes?

### Independence of the national broadcasters is vital. Where regulation impinges on this, it should be expunged. Where regulation upholds the independence of the national broadcasters, it is irrelevant to commercial broadcasters. The only consideration here should be to ask if commercial broadcasters should also be required to exhibit independence - especially when reporting on news and political events.

### Question 10: Is the reporting and accountability by the national broadcasters on their best endeavours to observe competitive neutrality adequate?

Competitive neutrality is an oxymoron. You cannot compete and remain neutral at the same time. The concept should be thrown out and replaced with "fierce independence" for the sake of our country and our democracy.

Question 11: Are you aware of any specific instances where the ABC or SBS may have received any other competitive advantage, due to their public ownership, to the detriment of a private competitor?

### No. If commercial broadcasters want to shoot themselves in their feet, they should accept responsibility.

### Question 12: The SBS Charter requires it to take into account the activities of the ABC and community television on radio and television. In the context of the competitive neutrality principles how in your view, is the SBS complying with this requirement? From your perspective does it adequately cover the activities of the SBS?

### This is acceptable within the confines of 'competitive neutrality'. The national broadcasters, however, should not be considered as competitors.

### Question 13: From your perspective do the national broadcasters seek a balance between competing in the market and complementing the market? Is that balance the same for traditional broadcasting and for new digital platforms?

### This is irrelevant as the duty of the national broadcasters is to be independent.

### Question 14: Do you have comment on these guiding principles?

'Competitive neutrality' is a ridiculous and unhelpful concept when the duty of the national broadcasters is to help our country.