

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

## Submission – Henry Haszler (21 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?

### I don't have any evidence of this one way or the other.However I have a strong belief that when asking commercial organisations to tender for government work - federal, state or local - the commercial firms add a premium to their bids. If that is the general case I would expect the ABC and SBS to be DISADVANTAGED rather than advantaged commercially because of their government connections..

### 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?

### Not aware of any differential effects not supported by the fact the government broadcasters are given defined roles under their charters. That is an differential regulation would have been tailor made to suit the objectives of the government agebcies.

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

### Don'r know.

### 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.

### 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?

### The SBS provides a specific service that differentiates it from the ABC. There are, for example, the various foreign language news programs featured on SBS and its use of foreign language films and TV series that set it apart from the rest.

### 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?

### I see almost no competition between the government broadcasters and commercial entities. The product quality, for example in news and current affairs programs on radio and TV, is far superior to the "Advertorial" content of much of what we see and hear on commercial channels.

### However, there is one area where I consider the government broadcasters complement their commercial counterparts. That is in providing a more balanced commentary on news than is available from the commercial "shock jocks" who often seem to be nothing more than rabnid right wing ideologues

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

### I have a tangential comment. Even blind Freddie can see this is fundamentally a politically motivated inquiry brought on as a sop to Senator Hanson as a means of getting her support for some of the Commonwealth Government's proposals. The background documentation says as much. So I hope the inquiry Panel can provide a politics and bias free response to their task.