

Thank you for reading my submission to this Inquiry.

First I would like to say that I don't have any financial interest in the outcome of this inquiry, I'm just a member of the Australian public, a GP, whose concern is for the public good. I have no expertise in this area and cannot afford a QC to argue for me, so here goes.

I don't accept the proposition that the public broadcasters are in competition with commercial media.

Commercial media exists to sell advertising to the biggest spenders in order to make money. Public broadcasters exist to inform, educate and reflect the diversity of Australian culture and values. They serve the Australian public as a whole and provide content serving a wide range of interests.

They are fundamentally different functions.

Commercial media is for itself. Public broadcasters are for the greater good.

Commercial media can project any view they want according to their owners and the interests of the sought after demographics. Public broadcasters, by their charter, are constrained by the need to balance views.

Commercial media, in the context of this inquiry, can hide behind 'commercial in confidence', the public broadcasters have everything in view. I do hope the commercial media are forced to justify their attack on the public broadcasters, to show how they're losing money because of them. Surely Netflix and Stan, Facebook and Instagram etc are stealing the eyeballs.

Commercial media have no need to educate, only to entertain. The ABC provides lots of free, very high quality, impartial content and resources to teachers and students.

Commercial media has no responsibility to serve rural Australia. The public broadcasters do.

The ABC is the voice of Australia, a vital part of our national identity. It's an Institution like the National Museum or Library- accessible for all, free, for the public good, and Australian. It must remain available to everyone and not hidden behind paywalls.

I watch, read, listen to the ABC news because I trust it and want to know what's important. There is no competition for my eyes and ears. Commercial news is whatever gets people to pay attention ie murders, car crashes, fires, anything that kicks up fear and anger, plus celebrities. That's what gets the ratings, that's what gets the advertising dollars. No competition.

The ABC is trusted and always there, a foundation of cohesiveness for Australia, a place (Australia) where so few are trusted now, especially politicians. In spite of relentless political attacks and defunding by those who don't like being held to account, it cannot be bought. Which makes it absolutely vital for the functioning of healthy democracy in this country.

I spent the morning listening to The Minefield on ABC RN- a deep discussion on the unfashionable virtue of forbearance. Where else does this happen? certainly not commercial media. Very few people go to church anymore to contemplate virtues, character or personal integrity, the greater life, the greater good. But the ABC has The Minefield, The Religion and Ethics Report, The Spirit of Things and Compass. Philosophy, Literature, Religion and Science may seem like 'niche' things but they are important to the foundation of society, our shared knowledge and understanding, our mutuality and our ability to reason for ourselves.

The commercial media advertise reality shows displaying betrayal, revenge, stupidity, envy, greed, lust and win at all costs mentality. And then there are the endless American murder shows.

As a taxpayer-funded body, the ABC has a responsibility to publicise that their programs are on and tell us how to freely and easily access them.

The ABC is in the same wretched position as migrants - they're 'taking our jobs' at the same time as 'living on welfare'. The ABC, under this management, is constantly trying to get better 'ratings'

to justify its existence but if it does well it's hounded for competing with private interests, so then there's an excuse to dismantle it. Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

No part of the public broadcasters should ever be put behind a paywall. As Australians we have a fundamental right to free access to information, education and entertainment that reflects Australian culture and values. The public broadcasters belong to us and are there for us. There's many of us who will fight to protect them from political interference and commercial attack.

Thank you for taking this into consideration.

Dr Julie Kidd

