

## SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY OF THE NATIONAL BROADCASTERS

The ABC is not just a media business. It is a public institution. The programming coverage of the ABC is importantly not subject to the influence of either commerce or politics. Rightly, it is not obliged to pursue ratings in order to raise advertising revenue. It is subject to a charter that enforces standards (e.g. regarding transparency) which do not apply to commercial media.

The ABC performs functions vital to the proper, informed functioning of Australian democracy and public affairs. It undertakes vital and wide-ranging investigations, raises issues of public importance, tells Australian stories and informs and educates the Australian public through programs of great depth and rigour. ABC television programs such as *Four Corners* (a program without peer), *Quantum*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *Media Watch* and *Australian Story* are excellent and important relevant examples.

Commercial media compete for advertising revenue. The ABC is not in this market, nor should it be. No case has been made by commercial media demonstrating any competitive disadvantage they suffer from the ABC. The ABC is not in competition with commercial broadcasters at all. The question of competitive neutrality does not apply to it.

Far from applying funding pressure to the ABC, the Government has an important responsibility to allocate sufficient funding to enable the ABC to perform its functions as described above. Maintenance of a strong and healthy public broadcaster is essential to Australia's public life. Privatisation of the ABC is extremely inadvisable.

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