

Submission to the Inquiry into Competitive Neutrality – National Broadcasters

I am an ABC listener and ABCTV watcher of many years standing. My preference for the ABC over commercial stations arises from a strong interest in important policy issues facing our country including climate change, the economy, wealth distribution, education, the arts, human rights and our international relationships – not necessarily in that order.

The ABC has the resources including highly talented and well-informed hosts and commentators who offer in-depth coverage of these issues, bringing in other commentators from global networks in a balanced and impartial way. Commercial media also make useful contributions in these areas but they are inevitably constrained by the resources they can afford to devote to matters that may not enhance advertising revenue on which they depend, the interests of their advertisers (which may influence what they broadcast touching upon such interests, for example food and packaging industries may not be comfortable with the ABC's current campaign against waste) as well as the political interests that may be associated with their advertisers.

The presence of a trusted source of information and discussion of important issues is a cornerstone of our democracy at a time when much unreliable material is being circulated and vested interests are supporting highly questionable views that seek to undermine scientific findings in such areas as climate change. The ABC and other publicly-funded institutions are critical sources of information and reference for citizens wishing to promote longer-term national interests and more particularly their political representatives.

The ABC does not compete for advertising revenue with commercial media so in this sense competitive neutrality is not an issue.

Peter Dawson

