

Submission to Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of the national broadcasters.

This inquiry claims to be examining competitive principles as pertains ABC broadcasting especially that in the digital domain. The current government supposedly endorses competitive principles including the encouragement of a diversity of providers which gives users a choice in service delivery. Properly funding the ABC goes a long way to supporting that principle. Certainly, even the current financially strapped ABC broadcasting is still different from the commercial offerings. It is of higher quality, more comprehensive and provides an offering that I trust. Such trust is essential to having an informed public which in turn is essential to the survival of democracy. Fake news (Furphies in the Australian vernacular) must be challenged and an informed public can help to do that.

Possible outcomes from this politically motivated inquiry seek to counter the espoused principles of encouraging a diversity of providers and user choice. Introducing paywalls, limiting the ABCs participation in digital formats and or introducing advertising will all limit access to our trusted news source and limit innovation in broadcasting services. Limiting the ABCs participation in the digital sphere will also limit access to what appears to be the future of broadcasting. The ABC should be properly funded to operate across all platforms taking advantage of their unique innovative programming both now and into the future, especially as these formats evolve.

Lastly, it seems to me that this inquiry is basically unfounded. Its like comparing oranges and apples. Yes, they are both fruit (exquisitely packaged, flavoured water + fibre) but their differences exceed their similarities. So too, with broadcasting. Public broadcasting is so different from commercial broadcasting that to compare them in a supposed context of comparative neutrality beggers belief.

P.L. Horn

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