

If you have any queries in relation to this Issues Paper or the inquiry or wish to make a more in-depth submission please contact the Department using the details below.

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competitiveneutralityinquiry@communications.gov.au

Form - Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of the national broadcasters

The Issues Paper identifies 14 questions. Questions 1-7 are addressed to the National Broadcasters (ABC and SBS). The Panel are seeking responses to questions 8-14 from all stakeholders.

- Share:

- Submission from Rosemary Kinne, [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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?

On the contrary, for ordinary people, the closure of the ABC shops was the loss of a commercial service. It was justified in terms of budget cuts to the ABC. Rather than undue advantage, closure on commercial grounds limited the full expression of the ABC charter 'to contribute to sense of national identity'.

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?

The self-regulation of commercial broadcasters has meant carelessness in truthful reporting. Scrutiny of the ABC and SBS is greater than on the commercial broadcasters. Only rich complainants can mount defamation cases against some commercial broadcasters. Recently the ABC has been subject to biased criticism, by those unaware of its charter.

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

Government regulation for ABC and SBS is adequate. It occurs through legislation but also through appointment of Board members and budget cuts. Budget cuts have seriously impaired the effectiveness of the ABC in regional Australia and in the Asia-Pacific region.

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?

Private 'competitors' are affected, as are ABC and SBS, by the on-line media growth. The ABC is meant to work for the common good of all Australians. Commercial broadcasters can put profit ahead of quality eg failing to sponsor Australian content in drama, film and docos.

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 and Channel34 are filling important needs for the 'common good' of our country. These areas are not being met by the ABC or commercial broadcasters. The recent debacle over Optus and the World Cup showed how important SBS is meeting the social and national needs of our country.

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?

The ABC and SBS are under pressure from government and the media. On the whole, balance is achieved, even though many 'critics' are unaware of their Charters. What goals have the commercial broadcasters, other than increasing profit margins and share-holder returns?

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

Commercial broadcasters do not offer the same quality of TV and radio content for education, and news coverage from all sides of politics as ABC and SBS. The main 'stakeholders' for the ABC and SBS are the viewers- ordinary people, citizens, residents. More of us need to know the Charters of ABC and SBS and support them.

Personal details

Name: (mandatory)

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