

Submission to the Department of Communications and the Arts

Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters

We strongly oppose any attempt from any organisation or group in Australia to restrict the capacity of the ABC and the SBS to provide the quality and range of programs they currently present to their very wide national audiences.

This inquiry should not be taking place at all. It is well known that it is a tendentious Government political response to Pauline Hanson's criticisms of the ABC in return for possible One Nation votes in the Senate.

The Government announced the inquiry on 29 March 2018. Since then Pauline Hanson has lost control of several Senators and is a much weakened and diminished political influence. The Government's initial justification for appeasing Ms Hanson has evaporated.

In these circumstances, it would save an enormous amount of time, effort, taxpayers' dollars and national angst for members of the inquiry to give serious consideration to recommending the abandonment of the inquiry. An appropriate date for this may be Friday 6 July 2018, two weeks after the deadline for submissions, by which time it will no doubt be clear that the Australian people are outraged by the motivation for and appalling possible consequence of this inquiry.

We recommend that immediately thereafter the Secretary of the Department should advise the Minister that in the light of the emerging political realities there is no need for the inquiry to proceed. The Secretary should further advise that the extensive funds allocated for the inquiry be redirected to deserving Arts projects in all states and territories.

The Government should accept these recommendations.

We give permission for this submission to be published.

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