



CEO ABC International

15 September 2016

To: Ms Margaret Reynolds, FOABC
National Spokesperson
ABC Friends

ABC International
GPO Box 9994
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

Mel:+61 3 9626 1416
Syd:+61 2 8333 5590
international.abc.net.au

Dear Margaret,

I understand some of your members have corresponded with you, voicing their concerns about Australia Plus' commercial arrangements with sponsors. Please allow me to clarify these arrangements, which have been misconstrued in the public debate.

ABC International is expressly permitted under the ABC Act to accept advertising and sponsorship. It does so in accordance with the ABC Editorial Policies, ensuring that editorial decisions are in no way influenced by any companies, Government, universities or other organisations who advertise or provide sponsorship on Australia Plus. The existence of sponsors and advertisers on Australia Plus has absolutely no improper impact or influence on ABC editorial content on the Australia Plus platform or anywhere else on the ABC.

This is a very important point for your members to understand. All ABC content, including content on ABC International platforms, is subject to the same robust ABC Editorial Policies that make the ABC the most trusted news service in Australia. There is a specific detailed guidance note for ABC International commercial services that you can access here: <https://edpolis.abc.net.au/guidance/advertising-and-sponsorship-on-australia-plus/> Those policies ensure that editorial decisions are not improperly influenced by any outside interests, including commercial interests.

The recent sponsorship arrangements were the result of ABC International taking a more proactive role in partnering with other organisations for commercial benefit in the wake of the cancellation of the Australia Network contract in 2014. As you will recall, DFAT cancelled the contract two years into a ten-year agreement, leaving the ABC with a significant challenge in meeting its ongoing charter commitment to international broadcasting.

I suspect many members of the public do not realise this history, nor do they understand ABC International has always carried advertising on its platforms, including advertising on the previous Australia Network TV

service, now Australia Plus TV.

Finally, I would like to point out that the current commercial sponsorship model was agreed upon by the ABC Board some time ago, when Mark Scott was still Managing Director. We are very pleased to have successfully attracted sponsorship revenues to support the ABC's International commercial services.

I trust that clears up any concerns you or your members have but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynley Marshall".

Lynley Marshall,
Chief Executive ABC International