

## Preamble

Since July 1 1932 the ABC has been the independent national public broadcaster so essential to our democracy. Yet, as we celebrate 85 years of this national icon, there is a disturbing campaign to undermine its traditional role as rival media and some politicians openly assault the fundamental principles of public broadcasting to protect their own interests and ideology.

Furthermore, the ABC is challenged by repeated government cost cutting and a rapidly changing media environment: making it difficult to maintain its traditional standards of quality programming.

In response, ABC Friends is launching a campaign - *A Vision for Public Broadcasting* - and asking Australians to rally in defence by telling us what they value and expect from the ABC.

## Vision Statement

**'We, ABC Friends National, advocate the following as a Statement of the Rights, Responsibilities and Values we expect from both the Government and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation:**

- Clear explanations and open procedures and processes when the government appoints future ABC Board members and the Chair of the Board.
- Transparency of ABC Board and management decision-making – particularly the sharing on a regular basis of the objectives of policy decisions and of programming.
- Recognition by the government of the day that the ABC's authority and its role in the Australian media landscape depends on its independence and freedom from political influence. The Senate estimates and other hearings should ensure public scrutiny and accountability.
- Financial security being essential for sound management and for board decision-making, there is a clear need for the ABC budget to be secure and at a level which ensures the ABC can fulfil its Charter requirements that it provide the highest quality of programming with depth, range and diversity for all of Australia. A five-year rolling budget is recommended.

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- In interpreting the ABC Charter requirements:
  - That the ABC is required to present an independent, professional and authoritative journalistic voice in its news coverage, current affairs reporting, documentaries, and in its range of specialist programs.
  - That there is a stated Charter responsibility for the ABC to provide innovative and diverse quality programming on radio, on television and digitally for all Australians.
  - That there is a responsibility for the ABC to report authoritatively on international issues and news, while promoting Australia's 'story' to the Asia and Pacific region.
  - That the ABC's responsibilities include the provision of emergency service broadcasting, regional and rural programming, children's, music, science, religious and selected other areas of broadcasting as determined by management.
  - That, in encouraging and promoting musical, dramatic and other areas of the performing arts, the ABC has a mentoring role for developing creative talent around our continent.
  - That the ABC Charter refers specifically to the corporation's educational responsibility.
  - Lastly, that the ABC's objective is to set the 'gold standard' for ethical, quality, specialist and diverse broadcasting nationally in the interests of informing, entertaining and stimulating our robust Australian democratic way of life. '

ABC Friends National

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