

14th February 2014

Letter to the Editor – Age & SMH



Dear Editor

Re: **Quality commercial media & ABC both important / Age article 14 Feb, 'Dominant ABC hurting the commercial sector'**

The community must take an interest in the health of the media sector. ('Dominant ABC hurting the commercial sector', The Age 14 Feb). Diversity of news and views, investigative reporting and in-depth analysis are essential to our democracy. The huge loss of journalism jobs in quality commercial media should be of concern to us all.

However, curtailing public broadcasting is not a solution to the failure of the business model that supported the commercial media sector. In the United States, where public broadcasting is small and no competitor for audiences, quality commercial media is also struggling.

The ABC is already seriously under-funded to meet its responsibilities as a national broadcaster. Its operational funding of \$864 million represents a decrease in real terms of 22.5% since 1986. As a share of government spending, the ABC's funding has almost halved since 1996.

The loss in serious commercial media journalism that is occurring should not be a reason to further downgrade the ABC. On the contrary, together with Australia's unacceptably high concentration of commercial media ownership, it highlights the importance of resourcing the public broadcaster to ensure that at least one truly independent media outlet survives.

Yours sincerely

Gael Barrett
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Friends of the ABC (Vic)

GS: media folder