



ABC POLICY STATEMENT

The ABC is a crucial service in rural and regional Australia. Public broadcasting tells stories from rural Australia that other city-based media just don't cover. It helps connect communities and is particularly essential during bushfires and other times of emergency. It provides an accountable public service across the nation that is valued, trusted and good value. It serves a population one-third the size of the UK, but does it with a budget one-eighth of the size of the BBC.

There is no wonder surveys consistently show the the ABC is the most trusted news source in Australia.

But over the last six years the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has waged a brutal campaign of cuts designed to weaken the ABC.

- Since May 2014 the ABC's budget has been slashed by more than \$250m¹
- As the full effect of the Coalition's cuts take effect over the forward estimates the ABC stands to lose a projected A\$783 million in funding by 2022²
- As Treasurer in 2018 Scott Morrison froze indexation on ABC funding, amounting to a cut of \$83m over three years³
- In this year's budget the Morrison Government handed out a small parcel of funding for enhanced news gathering but this is nowhere near enough to make up for the years of cuts handed down in previous budgets, including while Mr Morrison was Treasurer

This death by a thousand cuts has led to the loss of over 1000 jobs at the ABC between 2014 and June 2018⁴, large cuts to radio current affairs, the termination of *Bush Telegraph* on Radio National⁵ and the closure of regional radio outlets in Wagin, Port Augusta, Nowra, Morwell and Gladstone.⁶

¹[https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-08/budget-2018-abc-funding-frozen-in-\\$84-million-hit-bottom-line/9740690](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-08/budget-2018-abc-funding-frozen-in-$84-million-hit-bottom-line/9740690)

²<https://theconversation.com/the-abc-didnt-receive-a-reprieve-in-the-budget-its-still-facing-staggering-cuts-114922>

³ https://www.sbs.com.au/news/budget-2018-funding-freeze-for-abc-boost-for-sbs_1

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/jun/01/abc-axes-another-37-jobs-in-wake-of-84m-budget-cut>

⁵<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2014-11-24/rural-program-bush-telegraph-axed-in-abc-budget-cuts/5913404>

⁶ <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/2717163/abc-job-cuts-five-regional-stations-to-close/>



In June 2018 the Federal Council of the Liberal Party endorsed a motion calling for the ABC to be privatised.⁷

MY POSITION

- I am opposed to any any further cuts to the ABC and I will fight attempts by any Government to slash more funding from our national broadcaster
- I will push to have the indexation freeze on ABC funding lifted and to restore ongoing funding to the level needed to continue providing a high quality service to all of Australia, but particularly rural and regional Australia
- I will fight any attempts to privatise the ABC
- I will defend the ABC's independence and support proposals to depoliticise Board appointments including suspending the Minister's veto power over Board appointments except where there is cross-party and parliamentary consultation

⁷<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-16/liberal-members-vote-to-privatise-abc-move-embassy-to-jerusalem/9877524>