

To: Chief of Staff **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday 14th May 2014



**Federal Budget 2014:
ABC Friends urges Senate to block Budget
ABC to be cut by \$120m over next four years.
And further cuts are threatened.**

The Federal Budget has delivered a cut to the ABC's operational funding of almost \$40m over the next four years. In addition, the Government has announced it will terminate the \$220 million contract the ABC had to deliver the Australia Network international broadcasting service.

"The Liberal-National Coalition has broken its promise," said Glenys Stradijot, ABC Friends national spokesperson.

"Its cuts to the national broadcaster demonstrate a lack of respect for voters. They reveal a lack of support for the country's foremost cultural institution.

"And the Government's description of these cuts as a "down payment" on the review presently underway into the ABC's operations is alarming. It sends a message that further cuts are ahead.

"The impact will be huge because the ABC was already seriously underfunded to do its job before the cuts were announced. Its operational funding has decreased in real terms by 22.5% since 1986.

"The May Budget cuts will undoubtedly lead to ABC staff numbers being slashed. This means more repeats, less investigative journalism and fewer enriching and in-depth programs.

Australia Network

"It is simply unbelievable that any government with the long-term interests of the nation at heart would shut down Australia Network. Other governments are vying for the influence that broadcasting affords in the Asia Pacific region. They appreciate its importance to building positive relations and trade with their country.

"The axing of Australia Network appears to be the first stage of a reward for Murdoch-owned media outlets having campaigned for the Coalition in the last election. The Government has already declared its interest to amend the legislation that presently prevents it from handing over Commonwealth-funded international broadcasting to the News Corp-backed Sky News service.

"Australians voted for a government that promised not to cut the ABC. ABC Friends will actively oppose the cuts. We are urging the Senate to block the Budget," said Glenys Stradijot.

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Further comment Glenys Stradijot, ABC Friends national spokesperson
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ABC Friends is a national campaign. It comprises ABC Friends and Friends of the ABC organisations across Australia.