

24th May 2013

Letter to the Editor, The Age



Dear Editor

Re: Funding cut is bigger threat to ABC (re Age article and responses in letters to the editor)

Letter-writers to The Age were rightly alarmed by the paper's report of a push to have this weekend's State Liberal Council recommend that Tony Abbott privatise the ABC and SBS. ('State Liberals propose privatising ABC, SBS', May 22)

However, the greater danger faced by the ABC is the death of a thousand cuts which will result if the broadcaster's funding is cut or not indexed for cost increases. It is highly unlikely that any party seeking election would announce an outright intention to sell-off the nation's most loved cultural institution or introduce user-pays for its services.

If airtime continues to be filled, audiences are less likely to notice until it is too late a loss of innovation and gradual decline in the range, depth and specialist nature of programming, along with less investigative journalism and coverage of local events.

The ABC and SBS are critical for our democracy. Australia needs to maintain what little mainstream media diversity it has left. Unfettered by political and commercial influence, the ABC's importance is that it can speak without fear or favour and produce programs of cultural integrity.

The Federal Coalition has thus far failed to commit to maintain ABC funding. Malcolm Turnbull, the Coalition's Communications spokesperson, has not met with Friends of the ABC.

Yours sincerely

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President
Friends of the ABC (Vic)

GS: media folder