

To: Chief of Staff **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday 31st January 2014



Govt's efficiency review threatens ABC

"The Government's announced efficiency review of the ABC is an outrageous and dangerous interference in the ABC's independence", said Glenys Stradijot, a spokesperson for Friends of the ABC (Vic)

"The ABC is an independent statutory authority. In spirit and at law, Australia's national public broadcaster is meant to be independent.

"In the present climate, it is difficult not to suspect that the Government's motives are to curtail the ABC's activities. This announcement has come in the context of Prime Minister Abbott's latest attacks on ABC news reporting. The Murdoch media, which helped to elect the present government, views the ABC as a competitor and has been campaigning strenuously for the ABC's demise.

"This intrusion of the Government, a department and a former commercial TV finance head is happening despite independent surveys regularly revealing that the ABC is one of the most valued institutions in the country. And it's happening despite the ABC already being seriously under funded." [Info and sources are at end of this release.]

"If the Government was genuinely interested in the ABC doing its job effectively, it would have released the KPMG report into the adequacy and efficiency of ABC funding which was commissioned by the former Coalition government.

"That report cost the public about half a million dollars and was never released. Leaks from the report provided a damning assessment of the ABC's inadequate funding.

"It's ludicrous for the Minister to claim that this intervention into the public broadcaster's operation and how it spends its money will not influence the ABC's editorial decisions. Any funding cut that results will mean fewer and poorer quality programs and services. The Australian public simply won't stand for this," said Glenys Stradijot.

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Further comment Glenys Stradijot, FABC (Vic) Campaign Manager
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Information and sources

- . As a share of government spending, ABC funding has almost halved since 1996. www.businessspectator.com.au/article/2014/1/30/politics/abcs-aunties-budget
Yet over that time, ABC services have expanded; eg. online services, digital channels such as the ABC children's TV and ABC News 24, iView.
- . Independent opinion polls conducted by Newspoll regularly reveal high levels of public satisfaction with the ABC. Its 2013 ABC Appreciation survey found: . 85% of Australians believe the ABC performs a valuable role and a large majority believe it provides quality content. 78% of respondents thought the ABC did a good job at being balanced and even-handed.