

To: Chief of Staff **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Gillard Govt makes right decision on Australia Network

"Friends of the ABC applauds the Government's decision to leave Australia Network permanently with the ABC," said David Risstrom, President of Friends of the ABC (Vic).

"There is every good reason why the ABC should continue to provide Australia's international broadcasting, and no sound reason why any government should even contemplate handing it to a private operator.

"No other major country in the world outsources its international broadcasting service. A service of such strategic national importance must operate in the interests of the country as a whole. It should not be beholden to commercial or foreign interests.

"The ABC has a clear legal responsibility to provide international broadcasting services. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 specifies it is a function of the ABC *"to transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs"*.

"The ABC has the experience, infrastructure and breadth of content to provide the best service.

"Most importantly, the public broadcaster is subject to stringent requirements of integrity. It is widely trusted to be independent from commercial influence and not a propaganda arm of government.

The impact of Australia's international broadcasting will be strengthened by the Government's decision. In these times when media delivery platforms are becoming increasingly integrated, it would have been absurd to split Australia's international television from its overseas radio service which is also provided by the ABC," said David Risstrom.

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Further comment David Risstrom, FABC (Vic) President

If unable to contact David, phone Glenys Stradijot,
FABC (Vic) Campaign Manager Ph 0409 11 0411