

**Friends of the ABC seeks from all political parties and candidates for the 2010 Federal Election:**

1. recognition that a well resourced, innovative, *independent* and *comprehensive* national public broadcaster is of fundamental importance to Australian democracy and culture.
2. a commitment to support the ABC to –
  - ◇ maintain its independence and integrity in all facets of its services and operations – independence from government and commercial influence;
  - ◇ inform, educate and entertain all Australians;
  - ◇ contribute to our sense of national identity and reflect our cultural diversity;
  - ◇ maintain existing ABC services and networks;
  - ◇ produce in-house high levels of quality Australian programming;
  - ◇ restore specialist program units and services cut as the result of inadequate funds;
  - ◇ provide a balance of specialist programs and programs of wider appeal, as required by the ABC Charter; and
  - ◇ strengthen its international broadcasting.
3. a commitment to –
  - a) increase the ABC's base triennial funding so that the ABC:
    - (i) is funded in a manner that ensures its independence from government;
    - (ii) can fulfil its charter responsibilities to a high standard and is Australia's pre-eminent broadcaster on all broadcasting platforms;
    - (iii) is adequately funded to deliver its charter responsibility of international broadcasting on all broadcasting platforms and free from sponsorship and advertising;
  - b) introduce an indexation system that maintains ABC funding in real terms and a mechanism that will guarantee the ABC will always be well-funded;
  - c) ensure the national broadcaster has the transmission capacity to:
    - (i) fully participate in, and be at the forefront of, the technologically changing media environment; and
    - (ii) provide all Australians (including rural and regional) full access to all ABC broadcasting services;
    - (iii) provide extra digital channels, for example an education channel;
  - d) not change The ABC Act, including the ABC Charter, in any way which may diminish or weaken the ABC;
  - e) ensure the independence and integrity of the ABC Board by legislating for:
    - (i) a new system of appointments to the board which ensures members are appointed on the basis of merit and their strong commitment to the maintenance of an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster, and that the board is independent of political parties and the government of the day;
    - (ii) restoration of the staff elected position to the ABC Board; and
    - (iii) ABC Board transparency with regard to policy matters;
  - f) amend The ABC Act to ensure full and free access, without individual cost, to ABC services, including its online services;
  - g) amend The ABC Act to extend the prohibition of advertising and sponsorship on radio and television to all ABC broadcasting services (including online, eg. websites), and prohibit commercial activities that risk the ABC's editorial independence;
  - h) ensure the critical mass required for the ABC to produce television programs in all genres which are creative and uncompromised editorially is sustained (i.e., the public broadcaster should not be reliant on purchasing programming from the private sector and program selection should not be dependent on commercial viability);
  - i) review the functions, operation and appointment process of the ABC National Advisory Council to enhance creative and quality community input into ABC programs and services;
  - j) ensure Radio Australia access to transmission facilities, including shortwave, which enable it to independently broadcast its full range of programs to at least its reach and extent prior to the closure of the Cox Peninsula transmission system; and
  - k) restore Australia's international television service as an ongoing service of the ABC, enabling the ABC to deliver its international content across all broadcasting platforms under a single banner.