



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

## **Position Description**

Chairperson,  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Board

**August 2023**

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# 1. Selection criteria

The [Australian Broadcasting Corporation \(Selection criteria for the appointment of non-executive Directors\) Determination 2013](#) sets out the following:

1. **Candidates must demonstrate substantial experience or knowledge in at least one of the following fields:**
  - a) the media industry, including broadcasting, digital media and/or digital technologies;
  - b) business or financial management;
  - c) corporate governance, including managing large and/or complex operations in the private, public or not-for-profit sectors;
  - d) cultural industry and/or cultural policy, including its administration.
2. **Candidates will possess:**
  - a) demonstrated high level leadership and vision, and the ability to articulate a clear direction for an organisation;
  - b) a commitment to high standards of governance;
  - c) high-level judgement;
  - d) the highest standards of professional and personal integrity; and
  - e) an understanding of the media environment, in particular the ABC, its Charter and its place within the Australian community.

# 2. Merit-based selection process

The [Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983](#) (ABC Act) provides that a merit-based selection process must be followed before the appointment of a new Chairperson of the ABC Board. Under section 24B of the ABC Act, an independent Nomination Panel (the Panel) is responsible for conducting the selection process.

The Panel must place advertisements inviting written applications by persons seeking to be appointed to the position. The Panel is required to assess all applicants against the selection criteria (see [1. Selection Criteria](#)) and on the basis of merit. Under subsection 24B(2) of the ABC Act, the Panel's selection process is based on merit if:

- a) an assessment is made of the comparative suitability of the applicants for the duties of the Chairperson, using a competitive selection process; and
- b) the assessment is based on the relationship between the applicants' experience, skills and competencies and the experience, skills and competencies genuinely required for the duties of the Chairperson; and
- c) the assessment focuses on the capability of the applicants to achieve outcomes related to the duties of the Chairperson; and
- d) the assessment is the primary consideration in nominating the candidates for that appointment.

The principle of merit will be interpreted broadly in the merit-based appointment process. Formal qualifications and traditional work experience will form only one element of the Panel's assessment of an applicant's experience, skills and competencies. Non-traditional activities and career paths may also be recognised and valued as suitable qualifications which contribute to an applicant's overall suitability for

appointment. In its assessment, the Panel may also consider other issues raised by the Prime Minister or Minister for Communications (Minister), such as gender, diversity and geographic balance on the Board.

The selection process usually involves an initial assessment of written applications, interviews of shortlisted applicants, and referee and probity checks for those selected for further consideration.

The Panel is required to provide the Prime Minister and the Minister with a written report on the outcome of the selection process, which must contain a shortlist of at least three candidates and a comparative assessment of those candidates, for consideration by Government.

Appointment of the Chairperson of the ABC Board is made by the Governor-General, on recommendation of the Government. Noting the significance of appointments to the Board, this process takes several months to complete.

### 3. Categories of persons not eligible for appointment

Current and former members of Parliament and senior political staff members are not eligible for appointment as the Chairperson of the ABC Board while engaged in such positions, or for a period of 12 months beginning on the day the person ceases to hold one of these positions.

The classes of persons falling within the definition of 'senior political staff member' are specified by legislative instrument – see the [ABC \(Definition of senior political staff member\) Instrument 2014](#). Relevant extracts are below:

#### 4.1 Class A – Federal

- a) A person employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (Cth) and who occupies a position in the 'senior staff' classification as defined by the Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2012-2015 made under the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

#### 4.2 Class B – State or Territory

- a) A person employed in a senior position by or on behalf of a member of a State Parliament or a Legislature of a Territory to primarily provide advice about policy matters, the communication of policy matters to the public, and/or parliamentary matters.
- b) Without limiting paragraph 4.2 (a) a person is deemed to be employed in a senior position if the position is known by one of the following designations:
  - i) Chief of Staff
  - ii) Deputy Chief of Staff
  - iii) Principal Adviser (however described)
  - iv) Senior Adviser (however described)
  - v) Senior Media Adviser (however described)
  - vi) Specialist Adviser (however described).
- c) For the purpose of subsection 4.2, examples of advice about policy matters include:
  - i) developing policy proposals for the consideration of the member
  - ii) analysing policy proposals and making recommendations to the member
  - iii) participating in policy discussions with or on behalf of the member

- iv) where the member is a Minister, working with public sector employees to implement policies.

## 4. The ABC Board – composition and duties

The ABC Board is responsible for overseeing the operations of the ABC. The ABC Board consists of:

- the Chairperson;
- the Managing Director;
- the staff-elected Director; and
- not fewer than four nor more than six other non-executive Directors.

The duties of the Board, as set out in the ABC Act, include ensuring that the functions of the ABC are performed efficiently with the maximum benefit to the people of Australia, and maintaining the independence and integrity of the ABC. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that the gathering and presentation of news and information is accurate and impartial, in accordance with recognised standards of journalism, and that the ABC complies with all legislative and legal requirements. The Board is also responsible for developing codes of practice relating to programming matters and any datacasting services the ABC has the function of providing, and notifying these codes to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

## 5. Responsibilities of the Chairperson of the ABC Board

All Directors, including the Chairperson, on the ABC Board are expected to make a full contribution to the Board's work and operate as part of a team.

Each Director has a duty to exercise care and diligence and to ensure that the ABC meets its financial, legal, contractual and reporting obligations. Directors must act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the ABC.

Directors are guided by, and must comply with, obligations under the following legislation:

- the ABC Act
- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Directors are collectively responsible for Board decisions. Directors are expected to familiarise themselves with the organisation as well as their legal and statutory obligations.

## 6. Duration of appointment

The Chairperson is appointed by the Governor-General and holds office on a part-time basis for a period of up to 5 years and is eligible for reappointment. The sum of the periods for which a person holds office as either Chairperson or non-executive Director, or both, must not exceed 10 years.

The Governor-General may remove the Chairperson from office in accordance with section 18 of the ABC Act.

## 7. Time commitment

The Chairperson of the ABC Board holds office on a part-time basis. The ABC Board meets approximately 6 times per year in locations determined by the ABC Chairperson. The Board also convenes for an annual strategy day and other ad hoc/extraordinary meetings.

There are 2 Board Committees that meet on separate occasions throughout the year – the Audit & Risk Committee and the People & Sustainability Committee. Members of each Committee are appointed by the Board and the Directors may be required to hold a position on one or both Committees. Candidates should be prepared to allocate at least one and a half days for each Board meeting, a half day for Committee meetings and one day for the strategy day. Separately, considerable time is required to prepare for these meetings.

The Chairperson has additional organisational leadership commitments including prioritising the tasks of the Board, meeting regularly with the Managing Director, government and other key stakeholders and being a public facing advocate and as a spokesperson for the national broadcaster.

## 8. Remuneration and expenses

The Chairperson receives remuneration and expenses for their service on the ABC Board. Rates are set by the Remuneration Tribunal and reviewed each year. The [Remuneration Tribunal \(Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office\) Determination \(No. 1\) 2023](#) sets out that the current remuneration for the Chairperson is \$183,100 per annum. Allowances for travel are set out in the [Remuneration Tribunal \(Official Travel\) Determination 2022](#).

## 9. Conflict of interest and probity checks

The PGPA Act requires that the Chairperson of a Commonwealth entity, such as the ABC, declares material personal interests in a matter that relates to the affairs of the entity, subject to certain exceptions. The Chairperson must not be present while a matter in which they have a material personal interest is being considered at a meeting of the Board and must not vote on the matter, except in certain circumstances.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a Private Interests Declaration form. In addition, the Panel will undertake probity checks via organisations such as the Australian Federal Police, Australian Financial Security Authority, Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, and Australian Securities and Investment Commission, as well as right-to-work, education and qualification checks.

## 10. Equal employment opportunity and diversity

The principles of equal opportunity will be used in the selection process to ensure that fair, equitable and non-discriminatory consideration is given to all applicants within the limits of the selection criteria. The selection process will consider formal experience and qualifications as well as non-traditional career patterns such as community involvement and/or voluntary work that contribute to the ability of a candidate to perform as the Chairperson of the ABC Board.

## 11. Application process

Applications are invited to fill the upcoming vacancy (arising in March 2024) for the Chairperson position on the ABC Board. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications

and the Arts (the department) has engaged Challis & Company Pty Limited (Challis & Company) to assist the Panel with the selection process.

The appointment period (up to 5 years) and commencement date will be specified in the instrument of appointment.

To apply, please complete the online application form at [boardsearch.com.au/abc](http://boardsearch.com.au/abc). Among other things, the online application form requires you to demonstrate how you meet the selection criteria; to provide the contact details for two referees, and to attach your curriculum vitae (CV) (**no more than five pages**).

Please note: a compliant application requires both a completed online application form and attached CV, both of which will be considered by the Panel.

All submitted applications will be acknowledged with an on-screen notification and an automated email. If you do not receive an acknowledgement email, please check your junk mail folder and if you still cannot find it—contact Julie Reese at Challis & Company on 02 8039 2222 or at [abc-chairperson@challis.co](mailto:abc-chairperson@challis.co).

## 12. Closing date

Applications must be submitted **by 12.00pm AEST** (11:30am ACST; 10.00am AWST) on **Friday 22 September 2023**. You will not be able to access the online application or submit a form after this time, even if you have started completing the form beforehand.

Late applications will only be accepted at the discretion of the Panel.

## 13. Rights and privacy

On behalf of the department, Challis & Company will collect information for the purpose of determining a person's eligibility and suitability for appointment to the position of ABC Chairperson.

All completed and submitted information collected by Challis & Company will become the property of the Commonwealth.

Personal information, including documents containing personal information, will be handled and protected in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (Privacy Act), which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information.

Information collected by Challis & Company on behalf of the department may be disclosed to the Panel, the Minister and Prime Minister for the sole purpose of completing this appointment process. Except where it is necessary for the performance of these functions, and/or is authorised or required by law or with the person's consent, we will not use personal information for any other purpose or disclose it to any other person.

Under the Privacy Act, a person has the right to access and correct any personal information held about them by Challis & Company or the department. Any requests to access the personal information held by Challis & Company or the department, or to discuss any of the issues raised in this privacy statement, should be directed to the department's Freedom of Information Coordinator on 02 6274 7111 or [FOI@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:FOI@infrastructure.gov.au).

## 14. Further information

Visit [about.abc.net.au/who-we-are/the-abc-board/](http://about.abc.net.au/who-we-are/the-abc-board/) for further information on the ABC Board, including its current Directors.