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From: Annette Barbetti <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, 17 June 2018 3:44 PM
To: Competitive Neutrality Inquiry
Subject: Public Ownership and Free to Air Services for the ABC

To whom it may concern:

There are a number of reasons why the ABC should remain in public ownership:

1. Assuming that one of the conditions of any sale would be the retention of free to air services in rural areas, the Government is unlikely to receive the sort of return recently forecast by some members of the Liberal Party.
2. The ABC puts more effort into checking the facts behind its published news than other news media.
3. The ABC devotes less time to annoying advertisements (although some ABC advertisements are themselves rather annoying).
4. The ABC devotes more time to public interest programs than other news media.
5. The ABC gives time to people with differing political views. In spite of the alleged "left-wing bias", it has conservative commentators such as Amanda Vanstone and fearless interviewers like Leigh Sales (who has often put some challenging questions to left-wing politicians). During the Gillard government, it even ran a "comedy" program in very poor taste that made fun of the Prime Minister and her boy friend.
6. If the ABC were sold, it might end up in the hands of an extremist organisation that peddles comment rather than news (like, for example, the Murdoch press).
7. While it is true that the ABC would benefit from increased expenditure, it is most unlikely that the Government would be able to find a private sector owner that would be prepared to spend more money on it - the existing media organisations have been reducing staff numbers and the quality of their output has been declining.
8. The ABC provides some excellent Australian content, but it does run too many repeats of very British shows. Could we please have more Australian content? Would a privatised version of the ABC show any more Australian material?
9. It is a matter of national security. If there were a war, it would be desirable to have a Government-controlled ABC to provide information for the public good.
10. There is a need to provide adequate services in rural areas - even now, some remote areas need better access to services.

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