

# Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of Australia’s national broadcasters

## Submission – Jamie Morse (26 April 2018)

### Question 8: Considering the commercial activities of the national broadcasters (e.g. where they are selling or purchasing goods and services), is there evidence that they have taken undue advantage of their government ownership, to the detriment of competitive outcomes?

Since neither SBS nor ABC (radio, internet or TV) sell advertising space its hard to see where any of their programming channels might be exerting undue advantage over privately owned competitors.

### Question 9: What is the differential impact of regulation on commercial and national broadcasters, and is there evidence of consequent adverse impacts on competition and outcomes?

Competitive neutrality means that state-owned and private businesses compete on a level playing field. The only regulations which privately owned broadcasters could potentially claim disadvantage against nationally owned broadcasts are those with respect to cross-media ownership. Since our national broadcasters do not gain any commercial advantage from their multi-media broadcasting access (since both are commercial free) its hard to discern any commercial differential impact of those regulations on commercial and national broadeasters.

### Question 10: Is the reporting and accountability by the national broadcasters on their best endeavours to observe competitive neutrality adequate?

I am unfamiliar with how (or if) our national broadcasters are obligated to report/ account their activities with respect to observing competitive neutrality. But, I find this question concerning. What are the specific indicators to be applied to qualify such reporting as 'adequate'. Who sets those those standards and what are the criteria against which they are set?

### Question 11: Are you aware of any specific instances where the ABC or SBS may have received any other competitive advantage, due to their public ownership, to the detriment of a private competitor?

No

### Question 12: The SBS Charter requires it to take into account the activities of the ABC and community television on radio and television. In the context of the competitive neutrality principles how in your view, is the SBS complying with this requirement? From your perspective does it adequately cover the activities of the SBS?

SBS has cornered a space in the national market through the purchase/ production and broadcasting of niche content which commercial broadcasters have expressed no desire to compete with. From my perspective this question is moot. SBS niether competes with privately owned broadcasters for advertising revenue (since it is commercial free) nor for viewers (since commercial networks have not shown a desire to carve our market share through the broadcast of multi-cultural/lingual content).

### Question 13: From your perspective do the national broadcasters seek a balance between competing in the market and complementing the market? Is that balance the same for traditional broadcasting and for new digital platforms?

This is an excellent question. But I do wonder if the relative successes of our national broadcasters are dur to competitive advantage or the shortcomings of privately owned competitors. Our national broadcasters benefit from their difference. The style of content and editorial they provide is unique against that of privately owned broadcasters. In this regard I would judge that as complementary to the market rather than competititve. If commercial networks were to start broadcasting content similar to that of our national broadcasters, then we may have a case of competition where the neturality qurestion would become clearer and more valid. Since our privately owned broadcasters are not trying to emulate the content or editorial positions of our national broadcasters, they are part of a complementary broadcasting mix rather than a compettiive landscape.

### Question 14: Do you have comment on these guiding principles?

I have not been given detail on the guiding principles for competitive neutrality by our national broadcasting. I would like to receive that information or be directed to it.