



Kevin Rudd MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Ms J Rodriquez AM
President
Friends of ABC (Vic) Inc
GPO Box 4065
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

2 May 2007

Dear Ms Rodriquez,

Thank you for your letter concerning Labor's policy in relation to the ABC. Please accept my apologies for the delayed response. I receive over a thousand emails per day as well as hundreds of letters and faxes. One of the constraints of opposition mean that I have a lack of staff resources to assist me, so it is sometimes difficult to identify the important correspondence that needs a prompt reply. I am genuinely sorry for the delay.

Labor considers the ABC to be one of Australia's most important cultural institutions.

As you are aware, the ABC is charged with reporting on all facets of Australian life and culture and is integral to the development of Australia's national identity. For this reason, Labor considers it is vital that the ABC be unbiased in its approach to news and current affairs and that the ABC should not be stacked with Government political cronies, who know little about public broadcasting and who may use the ABC to promote the political agenda of the government. Labor's Platform has been drafted to reflect this.

The ALP Platform at paragraph 58, sets out Labor's policy in relation to the ABC Board, as follows:

"Labor will end political interference in the ABC by introducing a new ABC Board appointment process in which board members are appointed on the basis of merit. Candidates will be considered by a panel established at arm's length from the minister who will appoint Board members from a shortlist prepared by the panel....Labor will examine other options for further increasing the transparency and democratic accountability of the ABC and SBS Boards. In accordance with Labor's commitment to the principles of participatory decision making and industrial democracy in the public sector, the staff elected commissioner position on the ABC board which was abolished by the Howard Government will be reinstated."

In an Interview with Kerry O'Brien on the 7.30 Report on 30 April 2007, I further noted that:

"When it comes to the future composition of the board of the ABC, I'll be instituting a parallel process [to that of Fair Work Australia] so we don't allow the politicisation of the board of the ABC. I'm passionate about the integrity of public institutions. Public institutions have been prostituted by this Government so much over the last decade that we've actually got to draw a line. We need to restore the integrity of institutions so that they are put beyond the reach of partisan politics..... I will not make an appointment of any former politician or political staffer to any position on the board of the ABC. We've got to restore the integrity of institutions like the ABC fully."

The ALP Platform at paragraphs 55 and 56 sets out Labor's policy in relation to ABC funding, as follows:

"Labor is committed to ensuring adequate funding and support for Australia's public broadcasters, to enable them to continue to provide Australians with high quality broadcasting services, free from political and commercial interference."

Labor will provide funding on a triennial basis to the ABC and the SBS to ensure they can deliver quality public broadcasting services. Labor will ensure that the national broadcasters are able to exploit the potential of new technology to deliver attractive and innovative content over digital television and the internet."

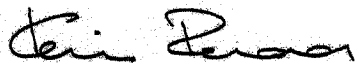
The ALP Platform at paragraph 59 , sets out Labor's policy in relation to advertising on the ABC as follows:

"Labor will ensure that the ban on advertising remains in place. Labor will also ensure that advertising is not permitted on ABC branded websites."

Labor considers it crucial to ensure the ABC's commercial independence and to return the ABC to its former state of independence, so as to enhance democracy by screening unbiased coverage of news and current affairs.

Thank you again for contacting me in relation to Labor's ABC Policy.

Kind regards,



Kevin Rudd
Federal Labor Leader
Member for Griffith