

03 9682 0074

Friends of the ABC  
Questionnaire  
on the ABC for  
Candidates in the 2007  
Federal Election

Australian Greens.....  
Electorate Candidate's Party

Helen Hutchinson.....  
State/Territory Candidate's Name

Party which presently holds the seat  
Australian Labor Party.....

Please return the completed Questionnaire by no later than Friday 26 October 2007 to FABC, GPO Box 4065, Melbourne 3001.

Before commencing this questionnaire, please read the accompanying letter and 'FABC's Proposed Policy for Political Parties' which outlines what FABC is seeking for the ABC.

. When answering questions, please place a tick • in the appropriate boxes and provide all information requested. Where any answer you give is the policy or is a rule of the political party which has endorsed your candidature, in addition to placing a tick in the "Yes" or "No" box, please also place a tick • in the box relating to "party policy".  
Please print your written answers clearly.

. FABC will assume that if you give no answer to any question that you do not wish to make a commitment on that matter.

. FABC welcomes any comments you wish to make about the ABC, matters raised in this questionnaire, or action you have taken or plan to take in your own party on these matters. Please attach a further page if we have not provided adequate space for your comments.

. Any queries: please contact FABC Vic Campaign Manager, Glenys Stradijot phone (03) 9682 0073

Summary of what Friends of the ABC Seeks for the ABC

. Funding: the restoration of ABC funding at least to its 1985/86 level; with that funding to be in the form of triennial base funding which is maintained in real terms and increased, as needed, to ensure the national broadcaster is at the forefront in a technologically changing media environment.

. Public Access to the national broadcaster: the guarantee of full and free access, without individual cost, to ABC services including its online services.

. ABC Independence from political and commercial influence: the introduction of a system to ensure appointments to the ABC Board are made on merit; reinstatement of the staff-elected director position on the Board; the extension of the prohibition of advertisements and sponsorship on radio and television to ABC online services; and the ABC prohibited from engaging in commercial activities that risk the ABC's editorial independence.

. Strong production base: the ABC's production capacity rebuilt.

. Radio Australia: the restoration of Radio Australia's services, including its shortwave transmission.  
over .

## A. IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUR COMMITMENTS

If the party to which you belong is elected to government or members of your party hold the balance of power in the Senate, how do we know the policies you express in this questionnaire will be implemented and adhered to by your party's parliamentary representatives during the forthcoming electoral term? Greens members of Parliament are bound by Party policy. If the Greens hold the balance of power we will support measures by either major party that seeks to enhance the role of the ABC and ensure its independence, autonomy and funding.

## B. POLICY ON THE ABC

Question 1 relates to a support role for government because the ABC is an independent statutory authority. If you and your party are elected to government, or hold the balance of power in the Senate, will you:

1. ensure the ABC is fully funded and supported by the Federal Government to fulfil to a high standard its role as an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster

1.1 contributing to and reflecting the cultural and intellectual diversity of interests in Australia?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

1.2 maintaining existing ABC networks and services?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

1.3 producing high levels of local programming:

-producing in house all news and current affairs, except current affairs produced by other independent public broadcasters; and -producing non-news and current affairs programs across each of its program genres and networks to at least the 1995/96 levels of in-house production (i.e., more than 75% for television)?

Yes

1.4 restoring specialist program units?

Yes

1.5 fulfilling its role at a national, state and local regional level by:

-producing and broadcasting programs of national significance; -producing and broadcasting in each state and territory programs which reflect state and local regional diversity, including a proportion of prime-time television news and current affairs programs which deal with state and local regional issues; and -operating television and radio studios and production facilities in each of the State and Territory capital cities?

Yes

If you and your party are elected to government, or hold the balance of power in the Senate, will you:

2. not change the ABC Charter or Act in any way which may diminish or weaken the role of the ABC, or increase the potential for government or commercial influence on the ABC?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

3. uphold the independence of the ABC - from commercial and government influence over ABC programming, editorial and management decisions - by

3.1 opposing any attempt to introduce advertising or sponsorship on the ABC?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

3.2 amending the ABC Act to extend the prohibition of advertising and sponsorship on radio and television to ABC online services (including its websites)?

Yes

3.3 amending the ABC Act to prohibit the ABC from engaging in commercial activities which risk the ABC's editorial independence?

Yes

3.4 ensuring the independence and integrity of the ABC Board by introducing a new system of appointments to the Board which is transparent and ensures members are appointed on the basis of merit and a strong commitment to the maintenance of an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster, and the board is independent of political parties and the government of the day?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

\* Please attach full details of the system you would introduce.

3.5 amending the ABC Act to reinstate the staff-elected director position on the ABC Board?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

3.6 not interfering in programming, editorial and management matters of the ABC?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

4. legislate to require the ABC Board to operate with greater public transparency with regard to policy matters?

Yes

5. amend the ABC Act to guarantee full and free access, without individual cost, to services a modern public broadcaster should provide -radio, television and online services (eg. websites, audio and video streaming)?

Yes

6. legislate to ensure ABC services have full access to the digital and multi media services environment and present and future means of transmission?

Yes

7. ensure Radio Australia has 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?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

Radio Australia is vital. The Greens want funding to restore Radio Australia's access to transmission facilities and to develop its important role in the Asia-Pacific.

8. adequately fund the ABC and fund it in a manner that upholds its independence by

8.1 introducing a process which guarantees the ABC is well-funded:

8.2 incorporating into the ABC's triennial base funding, targeted funding which the government has already promised to provide?

Yes

Yes this is party policy

8.3 increasing the ABC's triennial base funding, i.e., above any targeted funding that you will incorporate into triennial base funding or cut from any other ABC area?

8.4 providing, in addition to triennial base funding, full funds required for the national broadcaster to undertake technological change required for it to be at the forefront in a technologically changing media environment?

Yes

9. increase transmission funds and facilities to provide full access for regional and rural Australians to all national ABC networks?

Yes

The Greens support a funding increase of at least 30% to restore cuts made since 1996 and to bring operational funding back to the levels of the 1980s, plus - a mechanism that maintains the value of future ABC funding in real terms

- funding to restore Radio Australia's access to transmission facilities  
- additional funding to enable the ABC to be at the forefront of new media

10. remove the effective bar on the ABC producing some genres of television programs, by redressing the situation whereby government assistance to private producers, that is not available to the ABC, results in it being more expensive for the ABC to make programs than to purchase them?

Yes

11. make any change to the process or mechanisms by which formal complaints can presently be made against the ABC?

Yes

\* Please attach full details of any changes you plan to make.

Signed: *Denise Ditchburn* Date: *31/10/07*

I regret that I don't have more time to respond to this survey in depth. I regard the independence of the ABC and SBS as crucial to the development of truly high quality media in Australia. Please refer to the Greens media and communications policy for more details.

Candidate for: Denison (Tasmania).....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Remember to include any relevant attachments.

Printed & authorised by Glenys Stradijot, FABC(Vic) Inc. A0034181A 195 Bank Street, South Melbourne (11.10.2007)