



Additional comments from the Coalition

The removal of the 75 per cent audience reach rule:

Coalition members of the Committee regard the key issue in the discussion of the 75% reach rule as being that of local content. We recognise that the reach rule in and of itself does not provide a guarantee of adequate local content provisions and we also recognise that there is growing concern that local content, especially local news and current affairs, is diminishing in regional television and that further consolidation would exacerbate that.

As the Committee has noted one network, Nine, proposed that specific local content requirements be legislated as a prerequisite for any removal of the reach rule and there is considerable merit in that proposal.

While the first recommendation of the Committee does refer to local content and the definition of clear local content standards being a prerequisite to any removal of the reach rule, the Coalition members wish to emphasise that unless and until there is a clear and precise definition of local content obligations, set out in legislation, then any relaxation of the reach rule should not be entertained.

Determining that definition will not be easy - everyone will have a different view of what it should entail. But there should be a thorough, consultative process which reviews the existing content rules and the geographic areas to which they apply. Following that process, new legislative standards on local content would be enacted.

That having been done, then and only then should the relaxation of the reach rule be considered by the Parliament.

On-air reporting of ACMA findings:

Turning to the second recommendation of the Committee, the Coalition members do not agree that ACMA has made a persuasive case that broadcasters should at this time be obliged by legislation to broadcast on-air corrections, clarifications and directions based on ACMA's findings. ACMA's regulatory regime is in the

course of review by ACMA in consultation with the industry and any changes to the manner in which ACMA findings are publicised should be considered in that context.

Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Deputy Chair

Senator Simon Birmingham

Senator Barnaby Joyce

Mr Paul Neville MP