

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Australian Democrats recommend that the ABC Board consider pursuing an alternative agreement with Telstra Corporation solely for the sale and repurposing of ABC online content, subject to the strict application of ABC editorial policies and guidelines and a contractual undertaking by Telstra that ABC content is not to be materially altered.

Recommendation 2

The Australian Democrats recommend that all reference in the proposed agreement with Telstra to future advertising revenues be removed, and that the ABC Board policy decision prohibiting advertising on ABC online and around ABC content sold to third parties be maintained at least until after the completion of part (c) of the Committee's current inquiry has been completed.

Recommendation 3

The Australian Democrats recommend that, in order to ensure that internal ABC processes are free from potential pressures, no agreement for unspecified future co-productions with Telstra be made at this time. Co-productions could be explored as and when concrete proposals arise with a discrete commercial value. The Australian Democrats recommend that they be assessed closely in relation to the ABC editorial policies and guidelines and that their relevance to the ABC's charter also be considered.

Recommendation 4

The Australian Democrats recommend that, within the reasonable limits of available resources, the ABC seek to improve its monitoring of third party purchasers of ABC online content to ensure their fidelity to ABC editorial policies and guidelines. Where technological solutions may be available they should be explored.

Recommendation 5

The Australian Democrats recommend that reference to the cross-promotion of the two parties products in Telstra and ABC shops be removed from the proposed agreement. The Australian Democrats recommend that the ABC give further consideration to this proposal to ensure it does not breach ABC guidelines about the sale and promotion of other products.

Recommendation 6

The Australian Democrats recommend that reference to Telstra's EasyMail service be removed from the proposed agreement. The Australian Democrats recommend that the ABC give careful consideration to any proposal to link ABC Online to a third party's free e-mail service to ensure that it does not compromise the ABC's guidelines or integrity.

Recommendation 7

The Australian Democrats recommend that reference to future co-operation between the ABC and Telstra in the area of datacasting and multimedia be removed from the proposed agreement. The ABC may wish to give further careful consideration to this proposal to assess its potential advantages and disadvantages, and to ensure that the ABC's strategic flexibility is not constrained.

Recommendation 8

The Australian Democrats recommend that, within the limits of commercial confidentiality, ABC management improve their consultation with the ABC Board and with staff over commercial arrangements that raise basic issues of the ABC's editorial independence, integrity, philosophy and future direction.

Recommendation 9

The Australian Democrats recommend that the ABC, in close consultation with its staff, introduce new measures to protect staff who wish to raise concerns about the ABC's editorial integrity and independence in the evolving online environment. This might take the form of an independent committee with elected staff and union representation and the ABC might be required to provide a summary of complaints and findings in the ABC's Annual Report.

Recommendation 10

The Australian Democrats recommend that the ABC ensure during contract negotiations that Telstra's service is covered by an adequate privacy policy, and that a clear undertaking to respect the privacy and confidentiality of users, over and above general references to privacy policies, be included in the final contract.

Senator Lyn Allison
Chair