



media, entertainment & arts alliance
the people who inform and entertain

Mark Scott
Managing Director, ABC
ABC Ultimo Centre
700 Harris Street
Ultimo, NSW 2007

Dear Mr Scott,

I was concerned to read yesterday the remarks made by ABC chairman, Maurice Newman, to a gathering of journalists, program-makers and management on Wednesday.

Since his speech I have been contacted by a number of Media Alliance members from the ABC's news and current affairs team who have interpreted Mr Newman's remarks as an attempt to influence the ABC's line on climate change.

Mr Newman's speech has also been widely received as a criticism of the professionalism and integrity of ABC journalism.

Further, there have been reports that this is not the first time Mr Newman has made his views on this issue known to individual journalists and managers, reinforcing the impression, both inside and outside the corporation, that the ABC board's chairperson might be deliberately breaching the doctrine of editorial independence in areas on which he personally feels strongly.

I have written to Mr Newman to remind him of the impropriety of an ABC chairman intervening in the corporation's editorial direction and warning that his apparent criticisms of your editorial integrity will have brought comfort to critics of the ABC, undermining the great bond of trust that the public broadcaster has with its audiences.

With the ABC already facing the many pressures brought on by the digital revolution, this trust is an increasingly precious ingredient. It is vital for the health of public discourse in this country that the ABC is seen as a paragon of honesty, fairness, independence and respect – the four virtues that are etched at the heart of the corporation's charter of editorial policy.

Sincerely,

Christopher Warren
Federal Secretary
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