

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

**Response from Christopher Dore, Editor-in-Chief West Australian Newspapers and The Nightly,**

I realise it is difficult for you and your Sydney colleagues to get a grasp of the political scene in WA from the east coast comfort of your Ultimo workstation, but Media Watch will not have any legitimate, contextualised examples to support your undergraduate hypothesis. Nevertheless, I am confident you will do your best to give your viewers the impression you do. Good luck to you.

Basil Zempilas is not getting favourable treatment. To suggest otherwise is naïve, deliberately misleading and wrong.

In fact, because of the shameless local political and personal agendas gullibly taken up by Media Watch, one could mount a case that despite his obvious newsworthiness and the high public interest, we run fewer stories prominently about him than what might otherwise be warranted.

When on the eve of the election, we splashed the front cover of The West Australian with “Basil the B-grader”, Zempilas might even legitimately argue he gets a harder time from us than he does from Nine’s 6PR and from his mates at ABC Radio, where he has a regular weekly guest spot, a very casual and positive forum for him to spruik whatever he wants to talk about.

As you should know, he is a high-profile candidate, easily the best-known and most prominent aspirant contesting the election. His activities are newsworthy. Premier Roger Cook does not let a day go by without mentioning him. Labor have assigned a dedicated frontbencher given the task of spearheading daily attacks on him and he features prominently in Labor’s campaign advertising.

Your colleagues agree he is worth writing about, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-02-09/is-basil-zempilas-the-wa-liberals-trump-card-or-achilles-heel-/104905946> , and have a look at this glowing account in The Australian <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/basil-zempilas-ready-to-add-flavour-to-wa-parliament/news-story/ad6ca7ae0869550bdd378bbd2fb5ebe3>

Any sensible, unvarnished and unbiased analysis of what comparatively little is published and broadcast about Zempilas in our outlets would conclude our coverage of him is appropriate.

In relation to his column, your troublemaking informants, evidently more obsessed with the bloke than we are, should have probably told you that we have matched him up directly against Labor’s most formidable performer – Treasurer Rita Saffioti.

Rather than a stand-alone column as it once was when he was Lord Mayor, Zempilas the candidate is now forced to share the page with Saffioti. Both are considered potential future party leaders.

I’m sure you will show your viewers an example of the page so they can judge for themselves. Let me know if Media Watch thinks we should shrink the image of Zempilas down in size to make him the same height as Rita, just to be more balanced, like your little show.

All the best with your segment.