

Statement from an ABC spokesperson:

The ABC participates in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) which forms part of the ACON Health Limited (ACON) – Pride Inclusion Program. The AWEI is a national employee benchmarking index; 186 employers across all sectors participated in the index in 2021. It measures the impact of inclusion initiatives in organisations and is used by the ABC to monitor progress and help improve workplace practices.

The ABC also participates in other benchmarking indexes to monitor its progress and improve workplace practices, such as those run by the Diversity Council of Australia, Reconciliation Australia and the Australian Network on Disability.

Participation in benchmarking indexes has no bearing on content commissioning processes and no influence on editorial content.

ABC Editorial Policies require all journalists and content makers to:

- Maintain the independence and integrity of the ABC;
- Exercise ABC editorial control over the content the ABC broadcasts or publishes;
- Ensure that editorial decisions are not improperly influenced by political, sectional, commercial or personal interests.

The ABC has rigorous and independent pre- and post-publication processes to reinforce these standards.

Transgender and gender identity issues are complex and require careful editorial judgement to ensure informed reporting without causing offence or undue distress and harm to vulnerable individuals and communities.

Like other responsible media, the ABC endeavours to ensure its reporting is based on credible research, talking to people with lived experience, peak bodies and qualified experts and taking an evidence-based approach.

ABC journalists and content teams will continue to report on these matters from all relevant perspectives and the AWEI index will have no bearing on their editorial decision making.

Media Watch questions with answers from an ABC spokesperson:

ACON is a recognised lobby group championing for LGBTQI rights, why it is appropriate for the ABC to align itself with the organisation via Pride in Diversity/AWEI?

See above.

How can the ABC maintain impartiality towards ACON and its lobbying objectives when it is actively seeking approval from ACON via award points in the annual AWEI?

See above.

Has the ABC been marked down or lost points in the AWEI for critical or negative coverage of LGBTQI issues?

No. The index focuses on workplace inclusion, not editorial decisions.

Has the ABC been rewarded or earned points in the AWEI for positive coverage of LGBTQI issues?

The ABC won the external media award in 2020 and 2021 for the ABC Queer Instagram account and the "Innies and Outies" podcast.

Does ACON provide the ABC with advice/guidance on editorial, corporate, or recruitment language?

We do not seek guidance for editorial purposes. On rare occasions we have shared intended inclusive language statements used for corporate purposes.

What did the ABC pay to ACON/Pride in Diversity in the last financial year for program membership, training products, in house training/ consultancies, award attendance and conferences?

The ABC pays an annual subscription and has participated in the annual AWEI awards luncheon and annual conference.

Does the ABC have a financial relationship with any other recognised lobby group?

The ABC subscribes to memberships with various organisations which advise and advocate for inclusion, including the Australian Network on Disability and the Diversity Council of Australia. We also work with the Australian Human Rights Commission as a part of its IncludeAbility network and Reconciliation Australia on our Reconciliation Action Plan.

The ABC's embrace of the Pride in Diversity program and its celebration of AWEI awards has been widely signalled to staff and the public. Does ABC management acknowledge that this could influence editorial decisions on how gender, diversity and LGBTQI issues are covered by the national broadcaster?

ie: examples such as

<https://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/episodes/tavis/14020382>

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/abc-chairwoman-ita-buttrose-regrets-serious-editorial-lapses-in-trans-sport-story/news-story/4f488b5e216e5a1c8f804da7d4cc2fbf>

See above.