



Australian Broadcasting Corporation

2007 Federal Election

Report of the Chairman, Election Coverage Review Committee

Contents

- 1 [Summary – role of the ECRC](#)
- 2 [ECRC membership](#)
- 3 [Share-of-voice data – use and limitations](#)
- 4 [Guidance materials](#)
- 5 [Free time broadcasts](#)
- 6 [Complaints](#)
- 7 [How Australians responded to the ABC on election night 2007](#)
- 8 [Conclusion](#)

[**Appendix 1** ABC Federal Election Monitoring: Quantitative share-of-voice data compiled by Media Monitors – Cumulative - 14 October to 24 November 2007](#)

[**Appendix 2** Fact Sheet: *Allocation of free broadcasting time to political parties during election campaigns \(2007\); Production Guidelines for Free Broadcasts by Political Parties, Federal Election 2007*](#)

[**Appendix 3** *Federal Election 2007: Guidelines and Interpretation*](#)

[**Appendix 4** Schedule of Political Parties' Free Time Broadcasts, Radio and TV](#)

1 Summary – role of the ECRC

In the 2007 Federal Election, the ABC again played the part that Australians are entitled to expect, and have come to rely on.

The ABC is unmatched among media for the depth and extent of the election coverage it provides on radio, TV and online, across the cities, regions and remote areas of the continent.

Election coverage by the national public broadcaster has for many years been an integral part of the democratic process in which the governed choose who will govern them for the next three years.

This is a report of how the ABC monitored its own election coverage and provided free time for political parties' broadcasts. It did this for the purpose of striving for the high standards set for it by the *ABC Act* and by its own Editorial Policies.

The work of the ABC's Election Coverage Review Committee should not be misunderstood. The ECRC is not some sort of peak or co-ordinating committee that delves routinely into election coverage as it is being prepared and presented. It does not supplant during campaigns the usual lines of editorial authority in each of the Divisions – Radio, TV, News and Online – up through the Directors of those Divisions ultimately to the Managing Director.

An ECRC that tried to centralise control in such a way would be mistaken in principle and unworkable in practice. The ABC is too big, and election campaigns too dynamic. The statutory requirement for 'broadcasting services of a high standard' makes it unwise to concentrate in too few hands the multiple decisions that are daily required to ensure good election coverage. Mostly, such decisions are best taken by those with specialist and/or local knowledge, always with the understanding that they can confer with colleagues and refer matters to more senior personnel as and when necessary. Dispersal of decision-making is, in large media organisations, an aspect of ensuring diversity, and of avoiding the risk that the blind spots of a few may impair the vision of the organisation as a whole.

As the name suggests, the ECRC is principally a committee of review:

- It has representatives from throughout this uniquely evolved organisation (always interesting gatherings in a large entity characterised by several distinct 'cultures' – Radio, TV, News and Online - each with different histories).
- It gathers aggregated data about the ABC's election coverage week by week and meets every Friday during the campaign to analyse and discuss it.
- As appropriate and relevant, it disseminates the perspective that its elevated perch gives it to colleagues who are usually very busy and close to events 'on the ground'. The aim is to be helpful, to anticipate issues before they manifest as problems, and to bring them to the notice of the appropriate decision-makers. This 'barometer' role of the ECRC can be a valuable one in such a time-sensitive process as an election campaign.
- The ECRC also provides guidance as and when questions of interpretation arise among the ABC's many staff and outlets about how policies are to be applied in particular circumstances.
- The chairman of the ECRC must also supervise the fulfilment by the ABC of a function that is quite separate from day-to-day election coverage in news, current affairs and other programs. That function is the provision of free broadcast time on radio and TV to political parties eligible for it under guidelines established by the ABC Board.

This report describes how the functions described above were undertaken during the 2007 election campaign. It explains the use and limitations of share-of-voice data. The report then summarises election-related complaints data and the ratings data. On election night 2007, Australians relied on the ABC's coverage in record numbers. Appended are the key policy documents, data and guidance materials.

The ABC's election coverage monitoring system will be reviewed in 2008 in a process to which the public and the political parties will be invited to contribute.

2 ECRC membership

The 2007 Election Coverage Review Committee comprised experienced staff including personnel from the main content-producing divisions of News, TV and Radio. The local radio and national radio networks were represented. The expertise amongst the members included: communications and parliamentary relations; audience research; complaints handling; scheduling; and policy. Also represented was the online platform, which increasingly is generating its own content as well as carrying content that originates in the Radio, TV and News Divisions. In a federal election, local knowledge from across the country is important, so the ABC's State and Territory Directors were represented too.

The ECRC is constituted for the duration of an election campaign and then dissolved, to be reconstituted with appropriate expertise when the next territory, state or federal election is called.

3 Share-of-voice data – use and limitations

When an election campaign begins, the ABC starts to compile data about the amount of time on air occupied by candidates and party officials. This is called share-of-voice data. Inside the ABC, people refer to it as 'the count' for short. Data is collected internally by ABC staff and externally by Media Monitors.

Use and limitations

The data is used as a broad-brush indication of who is appearing on ABC platforms, where, and for how long. If one party seems to be getting a notably large or notably small share in a particular place and time, the reasons can be queried.

Share-of-voice data has limited utility. It is not a measure of 'bias'. It cannot prove or disprove the presence of 'impartiality'.

A moment's reflection should show why it is neither possible, nor would it be conducive to broadcasting services of a high standard, for the ABC to attempt to achieve a kind of mathematical exactitude in share-of-voice time as if that is what amounts to perfect balance or precludes bias or guarantees impartiality. Political campaigning, the practice of journalism, and life itself for that matter, are too untidy in practice, too contingent, for this kind of data to be more than a broad indicator. The statistics reproduced in this report (Appendix 1) should be interpreted accordingly.

Some practical reasons for interpreting share-of-voice data with care include –

- *Time on-air tells you nothing about what was discussed.*

To equate time with benefit to the speaker misses the reality. Of greater significance is the substance. What was the speaker discussing? What was the audience actually hearing? This is what may have real effects, not the time the content took. It is a mistake to believe that the greater the share of time the better for the recipient of that time and his or her party. In practice, candidates get interviewed about matters they may prefer to avoid. This is the nature of elections, of the proper scrutinising role of media, and of the glorious unpredictability of audience participation in democracies. For the parties' protagonists, discomfiting topics include gaffes, contradictions, pressure points between a party's national position and the effects of that position in particular electorates, and the opponent's agenda (ie being forced 'off message', as the jargon puts it).

- *Duration says nothing about tone or context.*

The audience experiences the content, and that may be affected by the styles and moods of the participants, the format (one-on-one interview or multi-candidate debate or audience talkback), the context within which the content takes place (eg a day on which unrelated but awkward, or unrelated but favourable, events have also happened). Time data sheds no light on any of this.

- *Some voices are more effective through brevity, and others lack power despite length*

Some candidates and party officials are better media performers than others. Some take a lot of words to say little of substance. For some, prolixity may cause trouble. Others are very effective because they are brief and punchy. Measured only by reference to quantity of time on air, these qualitative differences among political participants are missed.

- *Opportunities to appear on ABC platforms may be consciously declined by political professionals for their own reasons, or missed through no one's fault*

Share-of-voice data misses one of the most important elements of contemporary media relations: knowing when to be unavailable for comment. A party may deliberately decline to contribute its voice to the airwaves on a given day, for a given period, or on a given hot but awkward topic. A party may wish to deny an issue the oxygen of comment/response in the hope that the issue will expire and that the next news cycle will take up other matters which the party finds more advantageous. A party may want to shelter novice candidates lest their inexperience cause difficulties which media coverage magnifies. The ABC and its staff are not the key decision-makers in these situations. They have a duty to offer political professionals fair opportunities to appear on ABC platforms. They are not responsible if the opportunities are not taken up because the relevant person declines or is unavailable.

Sometimes, the untidiness of life causes opportunities to be missed through no one's fault. For example, a politician may be in transit when a particular program team is trying to offer him or her an opportunity to appear on air. By the time the program is again on air – the next day or perhaps the following

week – the agenda may have changed, new issues have ripened or are budding. Especially during election campaigns, caravans move on. A broadcaster required by statute to provide services of a high standard has to be responsive to news values.

None of these factors is reflected in bald share-of-voice figures, yet they are part of the lived experience of political parties and the media. These sorts of details, emerging from the hurly-burly of media relations during election periods, can usually explain variations in the share-of-voice figures from day to day, or week to week.

The following excerpt from the *Guidelines and Interpretation* document (Appendix 3) is a practical illustration of the work of the ECRC, of the limitations of share-of-voice data, and of how issues can manifest part-way through a campaign –

Candidates declining invitations to participate

Query

Where a significant imbalance in the share-of-voice count develops in the first half or more of a campaign due to candidates and party officials from a major party repeatedly declining invitations to participate in ABC programs, are ABC staff expected to 'make up the difference' by providing greater coverage to that party during the final weeks of the campaign just to get the share-of-voice figures to balance, regardless of news values?

No. The ABC does not use share-of-voice data in a strict mathematical way to determine balance or assess impartiality. The share-of-voice data is used as a broad indicator of where we might have to scrutinise ourselves and think through the reasons one major party appears to be getting significantly more time than the other. It is understood that there will often be unavoidable practical reasons for uneven figures, such as when any given party's representatives cannot be reached for comment or they decline to go on air for their own reasons. Such factors unavoidably affect the share-of-voice stats. By themselves, they are not evidence of partiality and if the count is read in a simplistic way it can mislead. However, people unfamiliar with media and political campaigns may mistakenly believe that balanced shares of voice equate to balance in the sense of substantive impartiality. So it is important that staff make and retain contemporaneous notes of unsuccessful efforts to provide candidates and party officials with time and of the reasons the opportunity was not or could not be taken up.

The ABC expects that the Editorial Policies will be upheld with particular care during election campaigns with the overarching aim of providing high quality coverage through:

- the reasoned application of news values;
- responsiveness to events and issues as and when they arise; and
- good-faith efforts fairly and accurately to obtain, scrutinise and convey the initiatives and responses of those vying for the electorate's confidence, especially those with a practical prospect of forming the next Government.

- *Incumbents naturally tend to get more time*

Another factor affecting share-of-voice figures is incumbency.

Unavoidably, Governments tend to get more time on air because they have a record to defend and (caretaker mode notwithstanding) will be called on to comment on domestic and international matters that arise during the campaign.

Incumbency at a State and Territory level may also affect share-of-voice, as the following excerpt from the *Guidelines and Interpretation* document (Appendix 3) shows –

State and territory politicians and federal election issues

Query

Is our coverage of State and Territory politicians speaking on federal election issues to be counted in our share-of-voice stats?

Yes. This has been past practice. The importance of doing so increases in federal election campaigns in which, as now, the same side of politics is governing in every State and Territory.

State and Territory politicians, especially Ministers, are constantly appearing on ABC platforms to speak and be questioned about a wide variety of matters, mostly to do with their State and Territory responsibilities.

During a federal election campaign, they are likely to make solicited or unsolicited comments on federal election issues. Being partisan political professionals, they are likely to try to garner support for their federal counterparts when they have access to the people who are simultaneously State/Territory constituents and voters contemplating their choices in a federal election campaign.

As State and Territory politicians on both sides seek to do this during a campaign, it is necessary for the ABC to be mindful of the need for balance in relation to their comments on federal election issues.

Internal share-of-voice count

Staff are asked to keep share-of-voice statistics for their own programs, and these are compiled weekly from across the ABC for consideration by the ECRC at its Friday meetings. It is an extra task for many, who already experience an election campaign as a particularly busy period. Methods of internal counting, collecting, compiling and reporting vary.

In light of the limitations of the data's quality and utility, emphasis is instead placed on staff maintaining records of the opportunities to appear on air as and when they are offered to candidates and party officials. The reasoning is evident from the following excerpt from the *Guidelines and Interpretation* document –

Personal logs

Query

Why are ABC staff asked to keep a log of their work contacts with the parties' representatives during the campaign?

The request is the same as in previous election campaigns. Staff are requested to take care to keep a note of their efforts to offer election campaign participants opportunities for coverage. A brief note of date, time, and key content like the topic and name/party is usually sufficient. Party representatives include sitting members, candidates and party officials.

The purpose of the request, as in past years, is to assist the ABC to respond adequately in cases where it may be claimed later that a given candidate or party was not given a fair go, when in fact they could not be contacted or declined to comment. The notes show the efforts to reach them and to provide an opportunity to comment or to be interviewed or otherwise participate. It is evidence of efforts to be fair, accurate and balanced. In some instances, of course, deadlines and other factors make it impossible to obtain material relevant to coverage of a given story or issue in the same program or on the same day. Balance can be achieved over time. That understanding of the practicalities is reflected in the relevant sections of the Editorial Policies, for example 5.2.2 (e) and 11.17.1.

During election campaigns, the time in which balance can be achieved is compressed, the importance of seeking balance is heightened, and the scrutiny of ABC performance is intensified, hence the request to keep the log.

External share-of-voice count

At the start of the campaign the ABC commissioned Media Monitors to undertake the external share-of-voice count. The company monitored a large section of ABC output and tallied in hours, minutes and seconds the time occupied on air by candidates and party spokespersons. Media Monitors also counted relevant content on ABC online, using a measure of words rather than of time. Shares were expressed as percentages.

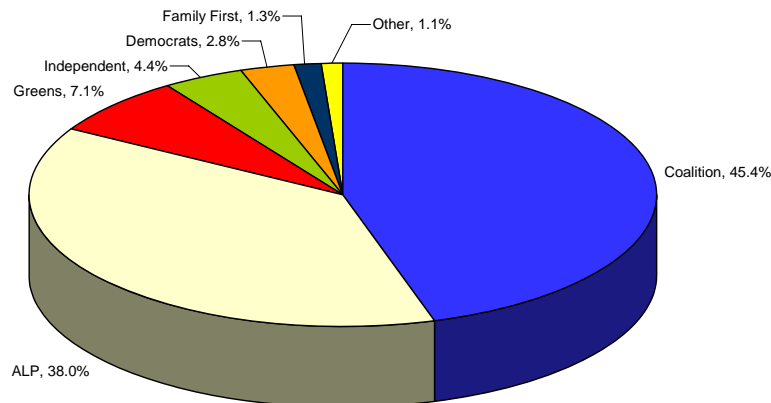
Criteria for inclusion of content in the external count were program-related and geographic. All nationally broadcast current affairs programs with a domestic political focus, such as *AM*, *PM* and *The World Today* on ABC Radio, were included. On ABC Television programs such as *730 Report*, *Lateline* and *Insiders* were included.

All text-based content from the ABC Online's Elections site was included, along with some original content from the *On the Record* site. Local programming included, for example, each state and territory edition of the *7pm News* and major news bulletins on ABC Radio.

Programs from all metropolitan Local Radio stations were included. The sample of non-metropolitan stations included a wide geographic spread marginal electorates. The total cost of the external count was \$60,000 (ex. GST).

Below is the cumulative share-of-voice data from the external count for all ABC platforms. For detailed data see Appendix 1. It should be read in conjunction with this text.

All Combined Share of Voice



	Radio		Television		Internet			Total %
	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	Words	%	
Coalition	40:30:06	44.2	11:00:11	52.1	2:37:15	43087	44.6	45.4
ALP	33:41:36	36.4	8:34:54	39.6	2:47:53	39216	41.4	38.0
Greens	7:10:26	7.8	0:49:27	3.9	0:16:50	7361	7.1	7.1
Independent	5:30:27	6.0	0:21:51	1.7	0:00:00	2040	1.7	4.4
Democrats	2:32:20	2.8	0:20:49	1.6	0:16:51	3373	3.7	2.8
Family First	1:18:18	1.4	0:09:24	0.7	0:10:22	890	1.3	1.3
Other	1:23:43	1.5	0:04:46	0.4	0:00:00	371	0.3	1.1
Total	92:06:56	100.0	21:21:22	100.0	6:09:11	96338	100.0	100.0

4 Guidance materials

From time to time during every election – federal, state and territory – ECRC members are asked by colleagues for advice about the interpretation of ABC policies in the light of particular circumstances. Many of the questions are frequently asked. Some are novel.

In 2007, a *Guidelines and Interpretation* document was prepared and made accessible to all staff (Appendix 3). It summarised practice that had been developed over many previous elections and had usually been disseminated orally or in mixed ways by the various Divisions, rather than consistently in one document across the ABC. During the course of the 2007 campaign, as queries were raised and answered, they were added to the main document, along with guidance tailored for specific Divisions' needs. The initiative was well received by staff as a practical tool for a time when pressure is high and time short.

5 Free time broadcasts

In the preamble to the 2007 Editorial Policies, the ABC Board expressly committed the ABC to some fundamental democratic principles, among them parliamentary democracy. For many years the national broadcaster has offered free time on radio and TV to eligible political parties. They can craft their own messages, and the ABC will broadcast them so long as they comply with guidelines established partly by law (*ABC Act* sections 79A and 79B) and partly by the ABC Board (see Appendix 2).

Although technology is changing methods of election campaigning – witness, for instance, the parties' increasing use of their own websites and the 'public spaces' of cyberspace such as YouTube – the major and minor parties sought and used the time made available by the ABC on radio and free-to-air TV. The eligibility criteria are set out in the documents in Appendix 2 and further explained in the guidance material (Appendix 3). Basically, the bulk of the time goes to the parties with a prospect of forming the next Government. Efforts are made to apportion time fairly to minor parties according to their existing parliamentary representation, the extent to which they field candidates, and their support in opinion polls. For the 2007 election, the production guidelines were relaxed to allow the parties to use more of the techniques of television production with which audiences are now very familiar. The prohibition against advertising and personal attacks remained. The 2007 Production Guidelines are reproduced in Appendix 2.

The order in which the parties are scheduled for broadcast on radio and TV over the period of the campaign is determined by ballot at a meeting to which the parties' representatives are invited. For the first time in 2007, schedules were published on the ABC online election site as soon as they could be finalised. The complete schedules, showing the dates and times each party's material was broadcast, comprise Appendix 4.

6 Complaints

The ABC received 2374 complaints during the election period, election night and immediately after. The largest category related to scheduling and program changes (734 complaints). A total of 590 complaints alleged bias (358 anti-government/pro-opposition, 161 pro-government/anti-opposition, and 71 other).

On election night, a large proportion of the complaints received related to problems with the graphics in the early period of the TV coverage, and another big category was complaints about background noise in the tally room. Few complaints were received about the coverage of particular seats.

The Audience and Consumer Affairs section of the ABC handles complaints.

7 How the public responded to the ABC on election night 2007

On the evening of polling day, Saturday 24 November 2007, ABC was the most watched TV coverage in the nation. The five-cities average audience was 1.075 million for ABC TV. It peaked between 10.10 pm and 10.15 pm with 1.314 million viewers, the highest audience for the ABC on election night since 1996. ABC radio coverage was extensive – local stations and national networks all played their parts. The ABC election website was heavily visited from within and outside Australia as results were progressively posted.

8 Conclusion

Covering a national election campaign is a massive undertaking for any large media organisation. A public broadcaster has special obligations. Resources and time seem always scarce. Scrutiny is intense. Expectations are high. Independence and impartiality are both required. Any monitoring process has to bear all this in mind.

Impartiality will not always be achieved in the eyes of all observers, especially in election campaigns when the stakes are high and partisans of all kinds are active and sensitive. Even definitions are contested in this vexed field. Many areas of media self-regulation, but particularly that which relates to impartiality, require what amounts to a continuous process of refining inexactitudes.¹ Reasonable people may accept that. But reasonable people may also expect, notwithstanding the difficulties, that impartiality must always be striven for in good faith by the ABC, especially during election periods. This expectation distinguishes the public broadcaster from the commercial media, who can be as partisan as their owner permits or commands. This is what property rights confer. The ABC is fundamentally different. The duty of impartiality comes to the ABC along with the privileges of statutory existence, independence by law and by convention, and the public funding that assures its existence regardless of market forces.

The work of the ECRC evidences the seriousness with which the ABC takes its statutory duties and its role in the democratic process in Australia.

Any quality-assurance system can be improved, and during 2008 the ABC will review the ABC's election monitoring and free-time broadcasts system. The political parties

¹ For more, see *The Elements of Impartiality*, a consultation paper at http://www.abc.au/corp/pubs/documents/impartiality_sep07.pdf

and the public will be invited to contribute. The legitimacy of any self-regulatory system depends in part on transparency. This report is a contribution to that too.

The 2007 federal election was my first as chairman of the ECRC. I thank: the inaugural chairman Murray Green for the base he laid over 10 years; the 2007 ECRC members; my own staff, particularly Jessica List; the many ABC personnel who contributed to the ECRC's tasks, particularly in gathering data and in getting the parties' free time broadcasts to air under time pressure; Media Monitors for its professionalism; and those appointed by each of the political parties to liaise with the ABC in the free time broadcasts process.

Paul Chadwick
Director Editorial Policies
Chairman, Election Coverage Review Committee
February 2008

Appendix 1 ABC Federal Election Monitoring: Quantitative share-of-voice data compiled by Media Monitors – Final report



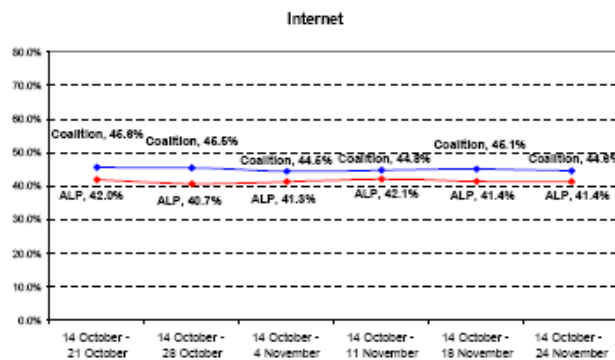
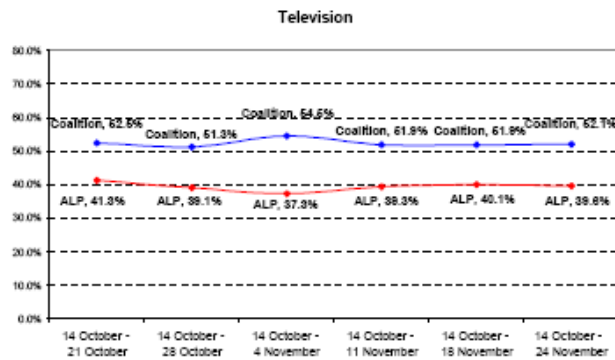
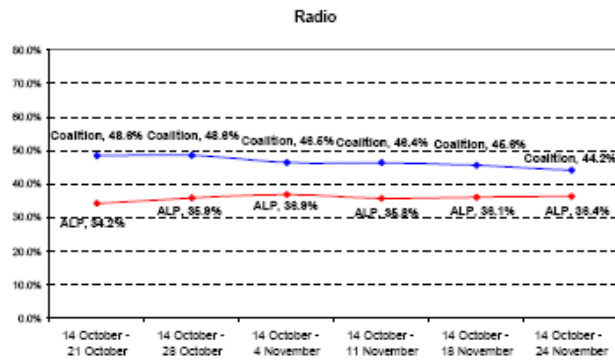
**ABC Federal Election Monitoring – Cumulative Share of Voice –
Executive Summary**

10:30am 14 October – 6:00pm 24 November 2007

DISCLAIMER: Media Monitors makes no representations and, to the extent permitted by law, excludes all warranties in relation to the information contained in this report. Media Monitors is not liable to you or to any third party for any losses, costs or expenses, direct or indirect, resulting from any use or misuse of this report or information contained in this report.



► Share of Voice by Platform Trend Analysis (Major Parties Only) – Cumulative



10:30am 14 October – 24 November 2007

2

► Program Share of Voice – Cumulative

			Total Duration/ Words	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Family First	Greens	Independent	Other	Total
				%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Radio											
	National Current Affairs Programs										
		AM	3:03:21	58.3	39.2	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.5	0.0	100.0
		The World Today	1:51:52	43.8	35.2	8.5	0.0	5.2	7.3	0.0	100.0
		PM	3:18:57	55.0	40.4	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	100.0
	National Current Affairs Programs Total		8:14:10	53.7	38.8	2.3	0.0	2.3	2.3	0.6	100.0
	Radio National Programs										
		Breakfast	3:14:51	45.3	40.6	2.3	0.1	7.0	4.7	0.0	100.0
		Saturday Extra	0:23:03	55.5	34.4	0.0	0.0	10.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
		Australia Talks	0:39:28	25.0	9.7	20.1	11.7	23.5	10.0	0.0	100.0
	Radio National Programs Total		4:17:22	43.1	35.3	4.8	1.9	9.8	5.1	0.0	100.0
	Triple J										
		Hack	1:23:02	45.6	40.4	3.0	0.0	5.4	3.4	2.2	100.0
	Triple J Total		1:23:02	45.6	40.4	3.0	0.0	5.4	3.4	2.2	100.0
	Local Radio News 7.45am										
		702 ABC Sydney	0:16:55	45.7	38.7	3.3	0.0	5.9	5.2	1.2	100.0
		774 ABC Melbourne	0:14:36	46.2	41.6	2.9	0.0	7.4	1.9	0.0	100.0
		612 ABC Brisbane	0:18:45	49.6	39.3	2.2	0.0	7.5	1.4	0.0	100.0
		891 ABC Adelaide	0:18:29	47.6	43.6	1.7	1.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	100.0
		720 ABC Perth	0:19:43	53.8	39.2	0.4	0.0	6.1	0.5	0.0	100.0
		686 ABC Canberra	0:16:29	46.9	44.8	2.8	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
		936 ABC Hobart	0:23:24	50.0	35.0	2.4	0.0	9.6	1.3	1.8	100.0
		105.7 ABC Darwin	0:22:14	51.1	38.2	1.9	0.0	4.3	4.4	0.0	100.0
	Local Radio News 7.45am Total		2:30:35	49.1	39.7	2.1	0.2	6.5	1.9	0.4	100.0



		Total Duration/ Words	Coalition %	ALP %	Democrats %	Family First %	Greens %	Independent %	Other %	Total %
Local Radio News 12pm										
	702 ABC Sydney	0:24:33	66.7	22.1	2.2	1.2	5.0	2.8	0.0	100.0
	774 ABC Melbourne	0:27:30	72.4	19.5	1.2	0.0	3.6	3.4	0.0	100.0
	612 ABC Brisbane	0:24:28	66.1	24.1	2.8	0.7	3.7	2.6	0.0	100.0
	891 ABC Adelaide	0:17:35	43.3	37.7	2.0	2.5	8.3	6.2	0.0	100.0
	720 ABC Perth	0:19:12	61.3	29.3	4.9	2.6	1.8	0.0	0.0	100.0
	666 ABC Canberra	0:25:32	68.7	23.3	1.0	0.0	4.3	2.7	0.0	100.0
	936 ABC Hobart	0:15:05	51.7	35.7	5.4	0.0	5.6	1.5	0.0	100.0
	105.7 ABC Darwin	0:19:51	48.1	28.5	5.0	0.0	12.3	4.4	1.7	100.0
Local Radio News 12pm Total		2:53:46	61.4	26.4	2.8	0.8	5.4	3.0	0.2	100.0
Local Radio News 6pm										
	702 ABC Sydney	0:19:06	53.4	36.4	3.5	3.4	3.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
	774 ABC Melbourne	0:21:12	53.7	40.8	0.2	2.0	2.8	0.5	0.0	100.0
	612 ABC Brisbane	0:20:24	45.2	46.2	2.0	1.6	4.8	0.3	0.0	100.0
	891 ABC Adelaide	0:22:25	47.2	35.2	6.0	1.5	4.5	5.6	0.0	100.0
	720 ABC Perth	0:20:57	51.2	42.3	1.5	1.6	3.0	0.4	0.0	100.0
	666 ABC Canberra	0:24:47	47.1	42.3	0.7	1.7	6.7	1.5	0.0	100.0
	936 ABC Hobart	0:18:26	53.3	38.4	0.0	1.8	5.5	1.0	0.0	100.0
	105.7 ABC Darwin	0:21:59	50.6	41.2	0.2	1.4	5.7	0.8	0.0	100.0
Local Radio News 6pm Total		2:49:16	50.0	40.4	1.8	1.8	4.6	1.3	0.0	100.0



		Total Duration/ Words	Coalition %	ALP %	Democrats %	Family First %	Greens %	Independent %	Other %	Total %
Local Radio News 10pm										
	702 ABC Sydney	0:17:22	55.0	41.3	0.3	0.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	774 ABC Melbourne	0:18:46	54.7	41.0	1.9	0.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	612 ABC Brisbane	0:14:30	56.3	36.2	2.2	0.5	4.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
	891 ABC Adelaide	0:16:26	51.5	37.5	4.2	0.5	1.3	5.0	0.0	100.0
	720 ABC Perth	0:15:45	48.0	46.2	1.9	1.4	1.8	0.6	0.0	100.0
	666 ABC Canberra	0:16:23	51.5	45.7	0.2	0.4	2.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
	936 ABC Hobart	0:14:36	56.3	36.8	2.8	0.5	3.1	0.6	0.0	100.0
	105.7 ABC Darwin	0:19:47	52.5	41.4	1.7	0.4	4.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Local Radio News 10pm Total	2:13:46	53.2	40.9	1.9	0.5	2.8	0.7	0.0	100.0
	Local Radio News Overall Total	10:27:23	53.6	36.5	2.2	0.9	4.9	1.8	0.2	100.0
Local Radio Mornings										
	702 ABC Sydney	2:49:50	46.2	37.5	1.9	0.0	10.6	3.8	0.0	100.0
	774 ABC Melbourne	3:24:49	45.3	36.6	4.1	1.5	10.6	1.5	0.5	100.0
	612 ABC Brisbane	4:25:10	48.5	43.2	3.0	2.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
	891 ABC Adelaide	4:59:22	36.4	33.6	3.8	5.3	6.6	12.6	1.7	100.0
	720 ABC Perth	2:53:07	38.7	47.6	2.8	0.0	9.0	0.0	1.8	100.0
	666 ABC Canberra	0:33:37	34.3	39.8	0.0	0.0	25.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
	936 ABC Hobart	4:59:05	38.4	34.4	0.0	4.0	11.3	4.7	7.2	100.0
	105.7 ABC Darwin	0:55:17	51.3	30.4	10.1	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	100.0
	Local Radio Mornings Total	25:00:17	42.0	38.0	2.8	2.4	8.4	4.4	2.1	100.0



			Total Duration/ Words	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Family First	Greens	Independent	Other	Total
				%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	Local Radio Drive										
		702 ABC Sydney	1:12:11	38.8	54.2	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
		774 ABC Melbourne	1:07:16	43.3	38.1	10.8	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.0	100.0
		612 ABC Brisbane	1:49:54	42.0	40.2	0.0	0.0	9.8	8.1	0.0	100.0
		891 ABC Adelaide	0:22:26	26.8	27.0	8.5	0.0	0.0	37.7	0.0	100.0
		720 ABC Perth	0:03:12	56.8	43.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		666 ABC Canberra	0:51:05	48.4	29.3	9.9	0.0	12.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
		936 ABC Hobart	1:12:06	49.8	39.7	0.0	0.0	10.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
		105.7 ABC Darwin	1:05:21	23.7	30.4	0.0	0.0	5.3	40.5	0.0	100.0
	Local Radio Drive Total		7:43:31	40.4	38.8	3.1	0.0	8.3	9.5	0.0	100.0
	Regional Local Radio Mornings										
		ABC Newcastle	1:46:21	22.4	27.1	5.6	9.3	10.7	11.2	13.8	100.0
		ABC North Coast NSW	1:24:39	40.6	37.2	1.8	0.0	4.6	15.8	0.0	100.0
		ABC Mid North Coast NSW	1:36:14	23.7	19.2	0.0	0.0	16.2	20.0	21.0	100.0
		ABC South East NSW	2:59:45	35.1	32.2	0.0	0.0	11.9	20.8	0.0	100.0
		ABC Ballarat	1:53:58	38.9	28.1	10.2	2.1	14.2	6.5	0.0	100.0
		ABC Central Victoria	1:07:31	32.5	38.2	12.6	0.0	4.5	12.2	0.0	100.0
		ABC Gippsland	1:27:10	36.0	45.4	4.4	4.2	5.8	0.4	3.8	100.0
		ABC Capricornia	1:31:02	60.5	28.9	2.7	0.0	7.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
		ABC Tropical North QLD	2:39:20	53.7	34.2	0.0	0.0	10.9	1.2	0.0	100.0
		ABC North QLD	3:07:26	42.9	33.5	0.0	0.0	12.9	10.6	0.0	100.0
		ABC North & West SA	2:29:06	34.3	28.5	6.9	5.5	10.5	14.3	0.0	100.0
		ABC Kimberley WA	0:42:58	40.0	39.0	0.0	2.1	9.5	0.0	9.3	100.0
	Regional Local Radio Mornings Total		22:45:30	38.9	32.0	3.2	1.8	10.6	10.3	3.1	100.0



			Total Duration/ Words	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Family First	Greens	Independent	Other	Total
				%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Country Hour											
	NSW		0:43:13	54.0	42.2	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.9	0.0	100.0
	VIC		0:42:47	40.1	26.2	7.4	6.2	18.2	0.0	1.9	100.0
	QLD		0:47:04	48.5	40.8	0.7	0.0	10.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
	SA		0:38:18	50.8	36.8	0.8	0.0	2.2	9.3	0.0	100.0
	WA		0:46:31	45.5	52.3	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Nth TAS		0:35:05	38.9	47.8	0.0	0.0	15.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
	NT		0:50:38	49.9	44.6	1.3	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Country Hour Total		5:03:36	48.8	41.6	1.5	0.9	7.6	1.3	0.3	100.0
Regional Local Radio Drive											
	ABC Newcastle		0:38:38	51.2	37.4	0.0	0.0	11.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
	ABC NSW Regional Radio		0:30:07	48.1	24.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.1	0.0	100.0
	ABC VIC Regional Radio		1:18:09	53.6	25.6	7.2	0.0	13.0	0.5	0.0	100.0
	ABC QLD Regional Radio		0:42:01	51.2	48.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	ABC SA Regional Radio		0:51:44	28.1	30.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.5	8.0	100.0
	ABC WA Regional Radio		0:10:40	65.8	34.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	ABC Nth. TAS Regional Radio		2:02:59	50.0	49.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	ABC NT Regional Radio		0:57:47	32.0	19.5	4.0	7.1	17.2	20.2	0.0	100.0
	Regional Local Radio Drive Total		7:12:05	48.1	35.5	1.8	1.0	6.0	8.7	1.0	100.0
Radio Total			92:06:56	44.2	36.4	2.8	1.4	7.8	6.0	1.5	100.0

			Total Duration/ Words	Coalition %	ALP %	Democrats %	Family First %	Greens %	Independent %	Other %	Total %
Television	National TV News & Current Affairs										
		7.30 Report	2:40:30	50.5	41.8	0.2	0.3	5.1	2.1	0.0	100.0
		Lateline	4:47:24	52.4	42.3	0.5	0.0	4.5	0.4	0.0	100.0
		Lateline Business	0:12:12	45.1	54.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	100.0
		Midday Report	0:31:01	42.0	18.3	9.0	6.0	9.1	15.6	0.0	100.0
		Insiders	1:23:17	44.1	35.7	7.2	5.7	6.4	0.9	0.0	100.0
		Four Corners	0:09:27	59.4	25.7	0.0	0.0	14.8	0.0	0.0	100.0
		Landline	0:20:14	46.0	54.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		The Leaders Debate	1:16:57	51.7	48.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	National TV News & Current Affairs Total		11:21:02	50.1	41.3	1.5	1.0	4.5	1.5	0.0	100.0
	State TV News 7pm										
		Sydney ABN2	0:47:40	54.1	39.7	1.7	0.2	2.1	2.2	0.0	100.0
		Melbourne ABV2	0:42:58	55.3	39.2	1.9	1.5	1.7	0.4	0.0	100.0
		Brisbane ABQ2	0:43:57	55.1	38.7	2.3	0.8	2.7	0.4	0.0	100.0
		Adelaide ABS2	0:49:15	51.5	38.7	2.4	0.5	3.0	3.8	0.0	100.0
		Perth ABW2	0:47:36	55.1	40.3	0.7	0.2	1.4	1.3	1.1	100.0
		Canberra ABC2	0:53:59	52.7	39.3	1.5	0.2	4.2	2.1	0.0	100.0
		Hobart ABT2	0:57:19	55.8	38.7	1.5	0.2	3.3	0.6	0.0	100.0
		Darwin ABD6	0:53:04	54.4	41.8	1.6	0.2	1.6	0.5	0.0	100.0
	State TV News 7pm Total		6:35:48	54.2	39.6	1.7	0.4	2.5	1.4	0.1	100.0
	Stateline										
		Sydney ABN2	0:15:44	63.1	36.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		Melbourne ABV2	0:16:59	60.4	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.6	0.0	100.0
		Brisbane ABQ2	0:28:01	53.0	21.8	9.2	0.0	7.6	8.4	0.0	100.0
		Adelaide ABS2	0:20:55	69.6	27.8	0.6	0.0	1.3	0.7	0.0	100.0
		Perth ABW2	0:30:58	48.6	53.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		Canberra ABC2	0:37:29	38.7	27.3	2.6	1.3	16.0	2.7	11.4	100.0
		Hobart ABT2	0:12:35	70.2	29.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		Darwin ABD6	0:41:51	58.6	41.8	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.4	0.0	100.0
	Stateline Total		3:24:32	54.3	34.3	1.8	0.2	4.4	2.9	2.1	100.0
Television Total			21:21:22	52.1	39.6	1.6	0.7	3.9	1.7	0.4	100.0



			Total Duration/ Words	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Family First	Greens	Independent	Other	Total
				%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Internet											
	www.abc.net.au										
		abc.net.au/ elections/ federal/2007/	96338	45.0	40.4	3.5	0.9	7.6	2.1	0.4	100.0
		abc.net.au/ elections/ federal/2007/ ontherecord/	6:09:11	42.6	45.5	4.6	2.8	4.6	0.0	0.0	100.0
	www.abc.net.au Total		96338/ 6:09:11	44.6	41.4	3.7	1.3	7.1	1.7	0.3	100.0
Internet Total			96338/ 6:09:11	44.6	41.4	3.7	1.3	7.1	1.7	0.3	100.0

Table 1

ABC Metro Stations

	Total Duration	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Family First	Greens	Independent	Other	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
702 ABC Sydney	5:19:57	47.0	40.3	1.6	0.3	8.3	2.5	0.1	100.0
774 ABC Melbourne	5:54:09	48.0	36.2	4.8	1.0	8.4	1.2	0.3	100.0
612 ABC Brisbane	7:33:20	48.0	41.2	2.2	1.3	5.2	2.2	0.0	100.0
991 ABC Adelaide	6:36:43	37.9	34.2	4.0	4.3	5.9	12.4	1.3	100.0
720 ABC Perth	4:11:56	43.5	45.0	2.5	0.4	7.2	0.1	1.3	100.0
668 ABC Canberra	2:47:53	48.6	35.5	3.6	0.3	11.3	0.6	0.0	100.0
936 ABC Hobart	7:22:44	42.6	35.6	0.4	2.8	10.4	3.3	5.0	100.0
105.7 ABC Darwin	3:24:29	42.2	33.3	3.6	0.2	4.4	16.2	0.2	100.0
Total	43:11:11	44.5	37.7	2.7	1.6	7.5	4.7	1.2	100.0

Table 2

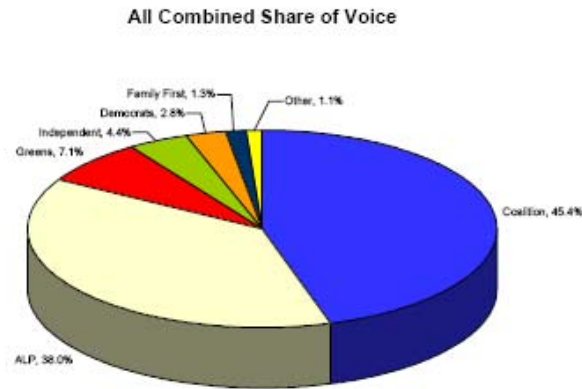


Debate

	Total Duration	Coalition %	ALP %	Nationals %	Total %
Environment Debate	0:48:16	48.9	51.1	0.0	100.0
Industrial Relations Debate	0:47:53	52.0	48.0	0.0	100.0
ALP 2007 Federal Election Campaign Launch	0:38:47	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Foreign Affairs Debate: Robert McClelland and Alexander Downer	0:48:16	55.5	44.5	0.0	100.0
Mark Vaile's National Press Club Address	0:42:38	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
National Press Club Address: Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd	0:58:33	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
National Press Club Address: Prime Minister John Howard	0:52:42	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	5:35:05	38.2	49.1	12.7	100.0

Table 3

► All Combined – Share of Voice Cumulative



	Radio		Television		Internet			Total %
	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	Words	%	
Coalition	40:30:08	44.2	11:00:11	52.1	2:37:15	43087	44.6	45.4
ALP	33:41:38	36.4	8:34:54	39.6	2:47:53	39216	41.4	38.0
Greens	7:10:26	7.8	0:49:27	3.9	0:16:50	7361	7.1	7.1
Independent	5:30:27	6.0	0:21:51	1.7	0:00:00	2040	1.7	4.4
Democrats	2:32:20	2.8	0:20:49	1.6	0:16:51	3373	3.7	2.8
Family First	1:18:18	1.4	0:09:24	0.7	0:10:22	890	1.3	1.3
Other	1:23:43	1.5	0:04:46	0.4	0:00:00	371	0.3	1.1
Total	92:06:56	100.0	21:21:22	100.0	6:09:11	96338	100.0	100.0

Table 4

The Coalition had the highest share of voice over the entire election campaign in radio coverage, with 44.2 per cent. The Coalition also received a significantly greater share of voice in television coverage (52.1 per cent, compared to the ALP's 39.6 per cent). There was a small difference in internet coverage, with the ALP receiving 41.4 per cent of the total, and the Coalition receiving a slightly higher 44.6 per cent share.

Overall, there was a significant difference in the total share of voice between the major parties (45.4 per cent for the Coalition and 38.0 per cent for the ALP).

The Greens had the highest total share of voice of the minor parties with 7.1 per cent. Independents had an overall share of voice of 4.4 per cent, while the Democrats had a share of voice of 2.8 per cent for the campaign.

► Leading Spokespersons – Cumulative

	Radio		Television		Internet			Total
	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	%	Hrs:Min:Sec	Words	%	%
John Howard	8:09:23	8.9	5:13:39	24.5	1:36:35	10931	14.1	12.3
Kevin Rudd	6:20:38	6.9	4:36:00	21.5	2:03:46	12208	16.6	11.2
Peter Costello	3:13:41	3.5	1:15:42	5.9	0:32:00	3781	4.8	4.1
Julia Gillard	2:57:00	3.2	0:39:39	3.1	0:00:00	2238	1.9	2.9
Tony Abbott	1:54:45	2.1	0:51:29	4.0	0:18:13	2533	3.1	2.8
Bob Brown	2:01:36	2.2	0:36:16	2.8	0:16:50	2916	3.3	2.5
Mark Vaile	1:36:11	1.7	0:07:26	0.8	0:10:27	4758	4.5	2.2
Wayne Swan	1:21:47	1.5	0:31:10	2.4	0:16:45	1602	2.2	1.8
Alexander Downer	1:38:32	1.8	0:29:13	2.3	0:00:00	1185	1.0	1.7
Joe Hockey	1:38:55	1.8	0:09:15	0.7	0:00:00	1222	1.0	1.5
All Other Spokespeople	61:14:28	66.5	6:51:33	32.1	0:54:35	52964	47.5	57.2
Total	92:06:56	100.0	21:21:22	100.0	6:09:11	96338	100.0	100.0

Table 5



▶ Methodology

Each reference has been individually assessed using the following methodology:

For **Television and Radio** all election material is individually assessed in the following manner:

- > Identification of party spokespeople in each reference;
- > All reported references tallied; and
- > Share of voice determined for each of the identified parties.

Length of direct quotes (min:sec) are determined on all relevant references to determine share of voice by issue, spokespeople and political party.

Internet

The <http://www.abc.net.au/elections/federal/2007/news> site is monitored daily. All election material is individually assessed in the following manner:

- > Identification of party spokespeople in each reference;
- > All reported references tallied; and
- > Share of voice determined for each of the identified parties.

Word counts of direct quotations and paraphrasing of identified parties are conducted on all relevant published references to determine share of voice by issue, spokespersons and political party.

Share of Voice: Comments by party spokespersons are timed (radio and television) and counted (internet) to calculate the share of voice. This form of report does not take into account comment by ABC presenters or non-party commentators.

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest single decimal place.

Media Monitors quantitative media analysis reports provide valuable information on the volume of media coverage and audience in various regions and categories to assist clients in evaluation of publicity and planning media strategy. In-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis provides additional information on the favourability of media coverage measured in terms of its positioning, prominence, messages communicated and other key variables and is recommended where thorough understanding of the likely impact and effects of media coverage is required. Contact Media Monitors for more information on in-depth quantitative and qualitative media analysis.

Appendix 2 Free broadcasts *Fact Sheet and Production Guidelines for Free Broadcasts by Political Parties, Federal Election 2007*

Fact Sheet: *Allocation of free broadcasting time to political parties during election campaigns* (2007) http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/documents/election_campaigns.pdf

ALLOCATION OF FREE BROADCASTING TIME TO POLITICAL PARTIES DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS



LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY GUIDELINES

Under Section 79A of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983, the Corporation may determine, subject to the Act, to what extent and in what manner it will broadcast political matter.

These provisions are reflected in Section 12 of the ABC 2007 Editorial Policies, <http://abc.net.au/corp/pubs/edpols.htm> which set out guidelines for the broadcast of political and election material. Section 12.1.3 of the Editorial Policies states:

'For the proper functioning of representative government in a democracy, it is essential that the public are fully informed of the issues of current debate and of the position and policies of those parties competing for political office. There are some basic assumptions underlying this view:

(a) The public is entitled to hear the principal points of view on all questions of importance

(b) The right to hear alternative policies and points of view is inherent in the concepts of objective reporting and impartiality, which are part of the ABC's statutory duty

(c) The full exchange of opinion is one of the safeguards of free institutions and of democracy itself.'

Consistent with these principles, the Corporation makes allocations of free broadcast time on ABC radio and television during Federal, State and Territory election campaigns for party political purposes as described below.

The Government and the official Opposition in an outgoing Federal, State or Territory Parliament or Assembly are granted equal time by the ABC for election broadcasts within the relevant jurisdiction during election campaigns being conducted for those Parliaments. When political parties are in coalition, either as a Government or as the official Opposition, the ABC will provide an equal allocation of time to the Government and to the official Opposition, leaving it to the parties, which are in

coalition to divide the time between them as they see fit.

Subject to eligibility, as detailed below, other parties may also qualify for the grant of free time.

CRITERIA FOR A MINOR PARTY TO BE GRANTED ELECTION FREE TIME

The Corporation reserves to itself the right to grant or withhold free broadcast time to political parties, including those not currently represented in the Parliament concerned, on the basis of the measure of demonstrated public support for the party.

The following criteria have been established by the ABC Board to determine whether a party will be granted election free time.

1. Number of seats contested

Parties must contest at least ten per cent of vacant seats in the House of Parliament for which the election is being held.

In a Federal Election parties must contest seats in the majority of States and Territories.

2. Demonstrated public support

Established parties (Parties which have contested a previous election in the jurisdiction in which the election is being held.)

Established parties must demonstrate public support according to the following criteria:

- Election of at least one member to the Parliament concerned at the immediately preceding election or in the case of the Senate at the previous Senate election; or
- The polling of at least five per cent of valid votes cast for either House at the immediately preceding election for the Parliament concerned.

New Parties (Parties which have not previously contested an election in the

FACT SHEET

jurisdiction in which the election is being held.)
New parties must demonstrate a minimum five per cent State/Territory wide or national support (depending on the election concerned) shown in a recent, recognized, and published independent poll.

Where a member of Parliament leaves a party that contested the previous election, and remains as a member of Parliament, and joins a new party, the new party, if contesting the next election, will be eligible for a party election broadcast, provided the criterion of Number of Seats Contested is met.

TIME ALLOCATED TO PARTIES

Government and Opposition parties

The Government and Opposition parties will be granted 45 minutes free time on ABC television and 45 minutes on ABC radio in Federal elections. The allocation for State and Territory elections will be 22 minutes free time on ABC television and 22 minutes on ABC radio.

In the case of Federal elections, the time is allocated as follows:

- ABC television (total 45 minutes):
 - 27 minutes for the party election launch; and
 - 18 minutes, split into six three-minute spots, for policy announcements.
- ABC local radio (total 45 minutes):
 - 27 minutes for the party election launch; and
 - 18 minutes, split into six three-minute spots, for policy announcements.

In the case of State or Territory elections, the time is allocated as follows:

- ABC television (total 22 minutes):
 - 10 minutes for the election policy launch; and
 - 12 minutes, split into four three-minute spots, for policy announcements.
- ABC local radio (total 22 minutes):
 - 10 minutes for the election policy launch; and
 - 12 minutes, split into four three-minute spots, for policy announcements.

Minor or new parties

The time allocated for minor or new parties is at the discretion of the ABC Board, based on demonstrated public support, the number of seats contested and any other factors deemed relevant.

If a minor or new party meets the twin criteria of contesting at least 10% of the seats in an election and demonstrates at least 5% public support or has at least one member in the existing parliament, then the party may be granted one three-minute announcement on ABC television and one three-minute spot on ABC radio.

If a party meets the twin criteria of contesting at least 20% of the seats in an election and demonstrates at least 10% public support then the party may be granted an additional three-minute announcement on ABC televi-

sion and an additional three-minute spot on ABC radio.
INQUIRIES ABOUT THESE ARRANGEMENTS

The ABC establishes, for each election, an Election Coverage Review Committee. This Committee does not direct coverage of elections on a day-to-day basis, but monitors and reviews the Corporation's performance, balance and fairness in accordance with the prescribed editorial standards (set out in ABC Editorial Policies).

For each election a detailed guide is issued to contesting parties. The guide outlines the allocation of free time on ABC radio and television, conditions for broadcasting, ABC technical and production standards to be observed, copyright clearance requirements, online posting of party election broadcast material and other necessary information. The scheduling of announcements is drawn by ballot to which all registered and eligible parties at an election are invited, soon after an election is announced.

All inquiries about the details of the allocation of election free time on ABC radio and television should be directed to Paul Chadwick, Chairman, ABC Election Coverage Review Committee, on telephone (03) 9626 1600, by facsimile on (03) 9626 1601 or by email to abc.ecrc@abc.net.au



PRODUCTION GUIDELINES FOR FREE BROADCASTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE BROADCAST TIME.....	1
III.	TYPE AND MANNER OF PRESENTATION OF POLITICAL MATTERS.....	2
	A. CONTENT OF ELECTION BROADCASTS.....	2
	1. Guiding principles and obligations.....	2
	2. Purpose	2
	3. Broadcast of advertisements prohibited	2
	4. Material must inform	2
	5. Methods of presentation to be consistent with ABC's obligations of independence and integrity	3
	6. Indemnity	3
	B. PRESS ADS FOR PRE-ELECTION BROADCASTS/TELECASTS.....	3
	C. COPYRIGHT CLEARANCE	3
IV.	BROADCASTS OF POLITICAL MATTERS.....	3
	A. TELEVISION	3
	1. Length of broadcasts	3
	2. Scheduling of broadcasts	4
	3. Identification of party election broadcast	4
	4. Production assistance.....	5
	5. Technical requirements	5
	B. RADIO	6
	1. Length of broadcasts	6
	2. Scheduling of broadcast	7
	3. Identification of party election broadcast	7
	4. Production assistance.....	7
	5. Technical standards.....	7
	C. ONLINE	8
V.	DELIVERY OF BROADCAST MATERIAL.....	8

I. Introduction

This document sets out the ABC's production guidelines for party broadcasts for the [election], including our technical and other requirements.

These guidelines have been drafted in accordance with the ABC's legal obligations and editorial policies:

- *Australian Broadcasting Act 1983 (Cth)*, especially s. 79A (broadcasting of political or controversial matter) and s. 8(1)(b) (duty of ABC Board to maintain independence and integrity of the ABC);
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Editorial Policies*, March 2007, especially Section 12 (Political and election broadcasts).

Additional information about the ABC's policy for allocating free time to political parties can be found in:

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Allocation of Free Broadcasting Time to Political Parties During Election Campaigns*, Fact Sheet, 2007.

Any offer of party election broadcast time is conditional on ABC Board approval. The ABC has a broad discretion to determine the extent and manner in which political matter will be broadcast. "Political matter" is defined by statute to be "any political matter, including the policy launch of a political party."

II. Eligibility for free broadcast time

The ABC reserves the right to grant or withhold free broadcast time to political parties, including those not currently represented in federal Parliament, on the basis of the measure of demonstrated public support.

The Government and the official Opposition in an outgoing federal Parliament are granted equal time by the ABC for election broadcasts during election campaigns being conducted for the federal Parliament.

Other parties may also qualify for the grant of free time, subject to the eligibility criteria set out below. The criteria established by the ABC Board for determining whether a party will be granted free broadcast time are based on the number of seats contested, demonstrated public support and any other factors deemed relevant.

To be eligible for free broadcast time, established minor parties (i.e., those who have contested a previous federal election) and new parties (i.e., those which have not previously contested a federal election) must contest at least 10% of vacant seats in the House of Parliament for which the election is being held, in a majority of States and Territories.

In addition, minor and new parties must have demonstrated public support according to the following criteria:

- minor parties must have:
 - at least one member elected to the federal Parliament in the immediately preceding election or, in the case of the Senate, the previous Senate election, or
 - have polled at least 5% of valid votes cast for either House at the immediately preceding national election;

- new parties must demonstrate at least 5% national public support shown in a recent, recognised and published independent poll.

III. Type and manner of presentation of political matters

A. Content of election broadcasts

1. Guiding principles and obligations

As noted in the ABC's Editorial Policies (Section 12), we are loath to impose restrictions on speakers at election periods. However, the ABC is subject to certain legal and other obligations which will affect our decisions about whether to approve material submitted by a political party for broadcast. The ABC is obliged to ensure that:

- the ABC acts in accordance with principles of fairness and objectivity in our election coverage;
- the national broadcasting service is not used as a medium for personal attack, as distinguished from criticism of a party and its policies;
- the ABC does not broadcast material which, in the opinion of the ABC, is defamatory or otherwise unlawful; and
- the ABC does not broadcast election advertisements, as distinct from broadcasts of political matters.

2. Purpose

The political parties must use the time on ABC platforms for the party's policy launch and announcements of policy on particular issues.

3. Broadcast of advertisements prohibited

Since the ABC is not permitted by statute to broadcast advertisements (ABC Act, section 31), the nature of material provided by each political party must be in the form of a political comment or statement only and must not be in the nature of an advertisement. The ABC reserves the right at its sole discretion to refrain from broadcasting any material which it considers may constitute an advertisement.

4. Material must inform

Launches and announcements to be disseminated free by the ABC must aim to inform voters about election policy matters. In determining whether material submitted for a party election broadcast is "political matter" or is an "advertisement", the ABC will take into account:

- the content;
- the presentation of the material, including style, tone and emphasis; and
- the extent to which the material resembles advertisements typically broadcast on commercial media.¹

¹ Material that resembles advertisements may include: stylised images, misleading non-verbal impressions, repeated catchwords and/or attempts to associate parties or candidates with anything universally approved or, conversely, universally condemned.

5. Methods of presentation to be consistent with ABC's obligations of independence and integrity²

A party's policy launch must be made predominantly by the party leader, but other speakers may be used provided they are candidates or sitting members.

A party's policy announcements must be made by one or more speakers who are sitting members or candidates. (The formal introductory and closing announcements may be in a different voice.)

News and current affairs style interview presentations will not be permitted.

Use of graphics and/or vision to illustrate key points is permitted provided the overall effect is not the same or substantially the same as advertising on commercial radio or television. For example, graphics prepared by a party for use in other contexts may be re-used in the party's free election broadcast time provided they are informative, and not accompanied by sound effects or other characteristics of advertising.

6. Indemnity

The ABC requires that each political party, in consideration of the ABC permitting it to make free election broadcasts, executes a suitable form of release and indemnity in favour of the ABC in respect of any liability which may arise out of any such election broadcast. The ABC shall also retain the right in its absolute discretion to refrain from broadcasting or publishing online any material which it considers may be of a defamatory nature or unlawful in any other respect.

B. Press ads for pre-election broadcasts/telecasts

While the Corporation recognises the right of a political party to advertise that its broadcasts/telecasts will be scheduled on ABC Radio and ABC TV and published on ABC Online, it would ask that any such advertisements make it clear that the broadcasts/telecasts are not ABC programs.

C. Copyright clearance

Where a political party proposes to use any material in which it does not own copyright, it is the responsibility of that political party to obtain copyright clearance and to evidence that clearance to the satisfaction of the ABC as and when required.

IV. Broadcasts of political matters

A. Television

1. Length of broadcasts

a. Government and Opposition parties

For the Federal Election, the ABC has determined that Government and Opposition parties will each be granted 45 minutes free time on ABC Television:

Policy Launches: A 27-minute slot on the ABC Television main channel for the policy launch.

² Section 8(1)(b), Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 (Cth).

Policy Announcements: The balance of free time (18 minutes) will be divided into six 3-minute segments for announcements of policy on particular issues.

b. Minor and new parties

Policy Announcements: If a minor or new party meets the minimum eligibility criteria for free broadcast time, then the party may be granted one 3-minute announcement on ABC Television. If the party exceeds the twin eligibility criteria by contesting at least 20% of the seats in the Federal Election and demonstrating at least 10% public support, then the party may be granted an additional 3-minute announcement on ABC Television.

2. Scheduling of broadcasts

Broadcasts will be scheduled on ABC Television main channel. Transmission times may be varied at the ABC's discretion.

Policy Launches: Policy launches will broadcast at a schedule to be determined by the ABC and will not be scheduled before 1800 hours.

Policy Announcements: Announcements will be scheduled from [insert dates] and conclude on [insert dates].

The ABC will prepare a schedule and that schedule will not be varied where a party fails to provide its material in time to fill its scheduled spots.

The allocation of schedule times among the parties will be determined randomly and in a transparent manner at a meeting of Party representatives and the ABC on [insert dates].

3. Identification of party election broadcast

The ABC will insert into a party's policy launch and policy announcements an on-screen crawl stating:

"This is an election broadcast for the <Party name>".

In policy announcements the crawl will run at one-minute intervals – i.e. at one minute and two minutes into the announcement. In the party's policy launch the crawl will run at five-minute intervals – i.e. at five minutes, ten minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes and 25 minutes into the launch.

A brief formal statement before and after each television broadcast is to be prepared and supplied by each party, giving the name of all speakers (including the natural person authorising), and presented in a uniform manner as follows:

Opening

VERBAL

"Here is a broadcast by <Speaker's Name> for <Party Name> for the 2007 Federal Election."

VISUAL

The party identification logo or graphic

Closing

VERBAL

"Speakers <All speakers' names, including the name of the candidate and the person who voices the opening and closing announcement>

Authorised by <Natural Person authorising>, <Party name>, <Place of Party's principal office>."

VISUAL

"Speaker(s) <List all speakers names, including that of person who voices the opening and closing announcements>.

Authorised by: <List name of natural person authorising>, <List name of Party>, <Place of Party's principal office>."

4. Production assistance

Subject to program commitments and provided adequate notice is given, ABC studio facilities in capital cities may be available for speakers to pre-record their material. The ABC will make available studios for the straightforward recording of a speaker only.

5. Technical requirements

All material must be supplied on Digital Betacam and be made to professional broadcast standard.

Every program submitted to the ABC from external sources for broadcast must pass a technical check carried out on ABC equipment by qualified operators to ensure that it meets ABC requirements.

The ABC is responsible for closed captioning (offline), and deadlines for delivery of material will reflect the time required to achieve proper closed captioning.

Any programs not meeting these requirements may be returned to the supplier for correction and a subsequent review performed to check for satisfactory performance when re-submitted.

Tapes shall be protected by suitable packaging and be delivered in manufacturer's purpose designed cases to the ABC and the packaging be clearly labelled to match the supplied program.

Tapes shall be of the highest professional quality and shall not cause the channel indicators on the videotape machine to deviate from green to either amber or red during the program.

Time code must be continuous, sequential and unbroken throughout the entire program area of the tape.

There must be no spurious time code at the head of the tape. If it is not sequential with the rest of the tape it must be ascending and less than the program start by at least 15 seconds.

At no time can the time code cross over the 00:00:00:00 point (i.e. it must have no component that is less than zero, (eg 23:59:50:15).

Audio should start 12 frames after first vision and end 12 frames before the nominated duration.

Countdown should go to black at 2 secs before first vision.

Audio must be fully mixed and either dual mono or stereo.

Format - Standard Definition

The format shall be 625 line 50 Hz 2:1 interlaces to the equipment manufacturer's specification.

There shall be one program per tape.

Aspect Ratio

ABC preference is for all programs to be supplied in full height anamorphic 16:9 format. Where 16:9 full height content is delivered it is the ABC's policy to generate a 14:9 letterbox version for transmission to our analogue viewers and a 16:9 widescreen version to our digital viewers. It is in the Party's interest to contain essential scene elements within the 14:9 safe area to ensure compatibility of their material to the two groups of viewers.

No mixture of aspect ratios is acceptable.

Program Content Identification

The leader must accurately reflect the program details.

The countdown leader must be in the same aspect ratio as the program.

Countdown should go to black at 2 seconds before program start.

Documentation

Any necessary paperwork/program sheets should be complete and accurate and include the identifying key /program/house number and other details as required.

Program sheets must give information as to the aspect ratio and, if it is 16:9 anamorphic, whether it is safe to be transmitted at 14:9.

Labels placed on digital betacam cassette tapes should always be placed in the well provided on the cassette and never anywhere else.

B. Radio

1. Length of broadcasts

a. Government and Opposition parties

Policy Launches: For the Federal Election, the ABC has determined that Government and Opposition will each be allocated 27 minutes on ABC Local Radio for their policy launches.

Policy Announcements: The balance of free time (18 minutes) will be divided into six x 3 minutes (in practice, 2 minutes 56 seconds for technical reasons) for announcements or statements of policy on particular issues.

b. Minor and new parties

Policy Announcements: If a minor or new party meets the minimum eligibility criteria for free broadcast time, then the party may be granted one 3-minute announcement on ABC Local Radio. If the party exceeds the twin eligibility criteria by contesting at least 20% of the seats in the Federal Election and demonstrating at least 10% public support, then the party may be granted an additional 3-minute announcement on ABC Local Radio.

2. Scheduling of broadcast

Broadcasts will be scheduled on ABC Local Radio stations in capital cities and regional Australia. Transmission times may be varied at the ABC's discretion.

Policy Launches: Policy launches will be broadcast at a schedule to be determined by the ABC and will not be scheduled before 1700 hours.

Policy Announcements: Announcements will be scheduled from [insert date] and conclude [insert date].

The ABC will prepare a schedule and that schedule will not be varied where a party fails to provide its material in time to fill its scheduled spots.

The allocation of schedule times among the parties will be determined randomly and in a transparent manner at a meeting of Party representatives and the ABC on [insert date].

3. Identification of party election broadcast

A brief formal announcement before and after each radio broadcast is to be prepared and supplied by each political party, giving the name of the speaker(s), and presented in a uniform manner:

Opening

"Here is a broadcast by <Speaker's Name> for <Party Name> for the 2007 Federal Election."

Closing

"Speaker(s): <List of Speakers' Names>."

Authorised by <Natural Person authorising>, <Party name>, <Place of Party's principal office>."

The duration of each broadcast will include opening and closing announcements. Announcements must not exceed 2 minutes 56 seconds.

4. Production assistance

Subject to program commitments, ABC studios in capital cities may be made available for speakers to pre-record their material, provided at least 48 hours notice is given. The ABC will make available studios for the straightforward recording of speakers only.

Except as set out in these Production Guidelines, the ABC will not edit material provided by the parties unless for technical reasons. If editing is required for technical reasons, the relevant party will be asked to approve it in writing.

5. Technical standards

Radio technical standards required: Audio recordings are to be supplied on Compact Disc (CD) or Digital Audio Tape (DAT).

C. Online

Following or at the same time as broadcast on television or radio, the ABC may, at its discretion, post on ABC Online the video or audio of any party election broadcast. The material may be posted together with a link to the official website of the political party that submitted it.

The ABC reserves the right to remove any such party election broadcast material or link from ABC Online at any time.

Any party election broadcast material posted online by the ABC will be presented in such a manner as to preserve the independence and integrity of the ABC.

V. Delivery of broadcast material

All recordings for television and radio must be available to the ABC for checking no later than 12 noon on the day before scheduled transmission. Where announcements are scheduled for Saturdays, Sundays or Mondays, recordings must be available to the ABC by noon on the preceding Friday.

Equivalent standby material of appropriate length may be supplied to the ABC for automatic substitution if a deadline is missed. Transmission of the standby material will be at the ABC's discretion.

Television material is to be delivered to:
[Location is to be advised]

Radio and Digital Audio Tape (DAT) to be delivered to:
[Location is to be advised]

Appendix 3 Federal Election 2007: Guidelines and Interpretation

This document has been edited to remove any reference to names.

First published: 30 October 2007
Last revised: 19 November 2007

Federal Election 2007 Guidelines and interpretation ABC Election Coverage Review Committee (ECRC)

Introduction.....	1
Interpretation - guidance on specific issues	4
Party officials	4
Union officials (<i>inserted 7 November 2007</i>)	4
State and territory politicians and federal election issues	4
Former federal party leaders (ex-PMs and ex-Leaders of the Opposition)	5
Promos	5
Cricket coverage - shortened programs (<i>inserted 7 November 2007</i>)	5
Independents	6
Personal logs	7
Candidates declining invitations to participate (<i>inserted 13 November 2007</i>)	7
Three-cornered contest.....	8
Election blackout does not apply to the ABC (<i>inserted 19 November 2007</i>)	8

Additional staff guidance note (*click on the link below to access this document*):

[ABC News and the Federal election 2007: Streaming and video on demand](#)

Introduction

The ABC's coverage of federal elections is determined by the duties, standards and guidance contained in the *ABC Act*, 2007 Editorial Policies, *Guidelines for Monitoring ABC Federal Election Coverage* and associated materials.

The practices of politics change. The technologies of media evolve. The ABC responds. Consider a current example: as the ABC enriches its online services to include more events streamed live, it is necessary to augment our guidelines on how to ensure balance. Live streaming has similarities to live TV, but is not the same. Past practice informs what we do, but it cannot be applied without rethinking and adapting.

The sheer diversity of the situations to which the broad guidance must be applied, within time limits, platform by platform, program by program, day by day, creates a need for interpretation and advice. When questions arise, the usual processes of upward referral should be followed. ECRC members can help too.

The main output Divisions are represented on the ECRC, which contains people with long experience of the ABC's standards and how to apply them.

This document begins by reiterating the importance of the ABC to the coverage of Australian federal elections. This conception of the ABC's role, together with section 12 of the Editorial Policies, provides the foundation for the more detailed advice that the ECRC gives on the many issues that arise in campaign coverage.

As queries are raised and advice provided, the ECRC will try to add new material to the list of questions and answers given below. They are not all "frequently asked questions"; some

As queries are raised and advice provided, the ECRC will try to add new material to the list of questions and answers given below. They are not all “frequently asked questions”; some are novel, or new variations on well-worn themes. The aim is primarily to be of practical assistance to ABC staff. But other benefits are to increase clarity and consistency, and to compile and enrich the valuable knowledge and experience that the ECRC members and others within the ABC have assembled over past election campaigns. (In this regard, the 10 years of work by the first chairman of the ECRC, Murray Green, is gratefully acknowledged.)

The main elements of ABC service to Australians during federal elections

The ABC must always be mindful of the primacy of the audience. It is they who will vote. It is they who, during a campaign especially, are making up their minds. It is they whom we serve. The Parliament created us under law for them. They pay for us.

The three main services that the ABC, the national public broadcaster, provides to Australians during federal election campaigns can be distilled as follows –

We inform -

In an election period, when spin and exhortation and persuasion abound, it is a fine thing to serve people simply by informing fairly and accurately, as best you can with the time and resources available.

We scrutinise –

It is a legitimate role firmly and impartially to scrutinise the records and the promises of those who want elective office at the time they are directly seeking the electors’ nod. The audience does not have personal access to the participants, so our scrutiny assists them. They can reasonably expect to be able to hear and consider the scrutiny and the answers to it from those who seek to govern them.

For the ABC to apply this scrutiny is one of the purposes for which it is guaranteed independence. Scrutinising those who seek and use power is one of the recognised standards of objective journalism. How independently and how accurately and impartially the ABC does it is part of what determines the ABC’s integrity. All these key terms – independence, integrity, accuracy, impartiality, recognised standards – are to be found in section 8 of the ABC Act. For the ABC, they are not optional in the way they are optional for a commercial media entity whose owner and/or staff may choose to be partisan in an election campaign.

We host -

This humble but immensely valuable role is often overlooked. A good host makes it possible for the protagonists in the campaign, the contenders, to explain, debate, and try to persuade and engage with voters, who comprise the viewing or listening or online audience. We are not protagonists or contenders, but as a host the ABC is important to the protagonists and to audiences.

Be confident, it’s justified confidence

Australia’s national conversation constantly relies to a large extent on the ABC because the ABC is understood to take that conversation seriously. Between elections, that conversation may ebb to a low burble on the topic of elective politics, which may be just one among many

other issues of public interest and discussion. But at times of federal election campaigns the conversation comes back to politics often, gets louder, and develops intensity about who will be chosen by the people to govern them for the next three years.

At these times, the ABC is relied on still more.

Apart from its unsurpassed coverage of the cities, regions and remote areas of Australia, its international arm and its online presence serve Australian voters abroad.

Over its 75 years, the ABC has built up rich experience in how to cover federal elections for a country that is geographically vast, demographically diverse and democratically inclined. Since federation in 1901, the ABC has covered more than two thirds of all federal elections (29 of 42).

Sustained, loud criticism can sap confidence and the energy that good service demands. Criticism of the ABC occurs, is inevitable, and varies in merit. But it must be addressed fairly on its merits if legitimacy and trust are to be maintained. Overall, the Australian community constantly reaffirms in strong numbers its support for the ABC. The evidence of appreciation for service given by the ABC over many decades and over the whole country is clear.

All this should generate confidence within the ABC's people as we again cover a federal election campaign. Not over-confidence, not hubris, not an exaggerated sense of our role. Just quiet and justified confidence grounded in legitimacy under law, tradition of public service, nation-wide scope, multi-platform capability and widespread community support.

Confidence is a prerequisite to high quality service in any type of work. In media, confidence is also a pre-condition to remaining steady in the face of the inevitable pressures that election campaigns bring.

Paul Chadwick
Chairman, Election Coverage Review Committee

Interpretation - guidance on specific issues

Party officials

Query

We are required to include party officials in our share-of-voice stats. Who is considered a "party official"?

"Party official" includes a person who:

- is an office-holder of the party (e.g., the President, Director, Secretary, Treasurer); or
- is a designated spokesperson (e.g., someone identified in a media release or offered for interview as an authorised spokesperson).

Union officials *(inserted 7 November 2007)*

Query

Is our coverage of union officials to be counted in our share-of-voice stats?

Not unless the union official is also currently serving as a federal Party official.

State and territory politicians and federal election issues

Query

Is our coverage of State and Territory politicians speaking on federal election issues to be counted in our share-of-voice stats?

Yes. This has been past practice. The importance of doing so increases in federal election campaigns in which, as now, the same side of politics is governing in every State and Territory.

State and Territory politicians, especially Ministers, are constantly appearing on ABC platforms to speak and be questioned about a wide variety of matters, mostly to do with their State and Territory responsibilities.

During a federal election campaign, they are likely to make solicited or unsolicited comments on federal election issues. Being partisan political professionals, they are likely to try to garner support for their federal counterparts when they have access to the people who are simultaneously State/Territory constituents and voters contemplating their choices in a federal election campaign.

As State and Territory politicians on both sides seek to do this during a campaign, it is necessary for the ABC to be mindful of the need for balance in relation to their comments on federal election issues.

The following clarification notice was disseminated by the News Division on 25 October 2007 and is relevant to other divisions as well:

This is a note of clarification about the election count. Please pass it on to anyone involved in the count who is not on this distribution list.

When State or Territory MPs - Premiers, Chief Ministers, Government MPs, Ministers, Opposition Leaders, Opposition Shadow Ministers, Opposition MPs - make comments about Federal election issues, they should be included in our election counts.

This would include, for instance, State MPs commenting about the pulp mill in Tasmania, Territory MPs talking about Federal intervention in Northern Territory Indigenous communities, or Federal-State relations on a range of matters such as health and education.

If you have not already been doing this, there is no need to go back to the start of the campaign - just add these people to the count from noon today.

Former federal party leaders (ex-PMs and ex-Leaders of the Opposition)

Query

Is our coverage of former federal party leaders counted in our share-of-voice stats?

Yes. Coverage of a former Prime Minister or Leader of the Federal Opposition will be included in the count for the party which they led.

It is recognised that not all ex-leaders make public comments that align with the contemporary views of their party. But, it is assumed that for the purposes of a general rule like this, most ex-leaders' public comments will be in support of the party they formerly led.

Promos

Query

Do we count promos in share-of-voice stats?

Yes. This may seem counter intuitive because promos contain grabs of voices from programs so counting them involves some duplication. The reason we do it is that the share-of-voice count, for all its weaknesses and foibles, is the available broad-brush measure of the *exposure* being given to the political players during the campaign. A promo amounts to exposure (sometimes, very effective exposure, if the grab of voice for the promo is particularly memorable). While the same words will of course appear in the program which is the subject of the promo, the audience will be repeatedly exposed to the message the protagonist's voice conveyed.

Cricket coverage - shortened programs *(inserted 7 November 2007)*

Query

When, during the lunch and tea breaks in the cricket, Local Radio uses shortened versions of programs that may include election coverage, how does this affect the share-of-voice count?

The use of shortened programs is unavoidable, so it is a matter of taking reasonable steps to provide balanced coverage in the circumstances. Cricket coverage is scheduled to occur on a significant number of the remaining days of the 2007 federal election campaign, so this is not a minor matter.

The makers of the relevant programs are asked to bear in mind the likelihood that their

programs may be broadcast in shortened form and, when dealing with a story involving a federal election issue, to take particular care to try to ensure that balance occurs within the story. It will be rare that an edit cuts a self-contained story midway.

It is recognised that balance within a story is not always be possible, for instance because a spokesperson for one side may not be available when the story is being prepared. They may be able to appear later in the program, even the shortened version. In some circumstances, balance within a shortened program may not be possible either. In such circumstances, follow the usual Editorial Policies approach (section 5.2.2(e)) and seek to achieve balance as soon as reasonably practicable and in an appropriate manner. For example, consider taking up the story again briefly in the next scheduled edition of the program, and include the balancing material at a time in the program that ensures it will be heard in the shortened version.

In relation to the effect on the count, factors such as this are understood to occur and to affect the figures. Please keep a note of such factors when they occur. It is contemporaneous evidence of good faith efforts to achieve balance, and of the factors that prevent it in particular circumstances, that are important to the ABC's integrity, not mathematical evenness in the figures.

Independents

Query

Why does the ABC – in its free broadcast time allocation and its general news and information coverage - strive for balanced voice time for the major parties over the course of the campaign, but not for balance across all candidates, including independents and those from minor parties?

The broad principles behind the allocation of free broadcast time are:

- 1 the bulk of the time is given to the parties which, if successful, would be in a position to form government; and
- 2 the criteria to determine time given to minor or new parties deal not just with existing representation but also consider degree of formal participation in the election (seats contested) and support nationally (polls). For details, see ABC Fact Sheet 'Allocation of Free Broadcasting Time to Political Parties during Election Campaigns', 2007).

As the national broadcaster, the ABC views the allocation of free time from a national perspective, rather than from a local perspective. Independent members and candidates are quintessentially locals, whose fortunes - unlike those of parties - are determined within the boundaries of a single electorate.

Minor-party candidates and Independents may of course be newsworthy. Leaving to one side the free broadcast time issue, in approaching election coverage in news and information programs, ABC staff are advised to determine coverage of minor parties and independents according to news value, and to provide coverage not disproportionate to the role of minor parties and independents in the campaign or in issues before the electorate.

Personal logs

Query

Why are ABC staff asked to keep a log of their work contacts with the parties' representatives during the campaign?

The request is the same as in previous election campaigns. Staff are requested to take care to keep a note of their efforts to offer election campaign participants opportunities for coverage. A brief note of date, time, and key content like the topic and name/party is usually sufficient. Party representatives include sitting members, candidates and party officials.

The purpose of the request, as in past years, is to assist the ABC to respond adequately in cases where it may be claimed later that a given candidate or party was not given a fair go, when in fact they could not be contacted or declined to comment. The notes show the efforts to reach them and to provide an opportunity to comment or to be interviewed or otherwise participate. It is evidence of efforts to be fair, accurate and balanced. In some instances, of course, deadlines and other factors make it impossible to obtain material relevant to coverage of a given story or issue in the same program or on the same day. Balance can be achieved over time. That understanding of the practicalities is reflected in the relevant sections of the Editorial Policies, for example 5.2.2 (e) and 11.17.1.

During election campaigns, the time in which balance can be achieved is compressed, the importance of seeking balance is heightened, and the scrutiny of ABC performance is intensified, hence the request to keep the log.

Candidates declining invitations to participate *(inserted 13 November 2007)*

Query

Where a significant imbalance in the share-of-voice count develops in the first half or more of a campaign due to candidates and party officials from a major party repeatedly declining invitations to participate in ABC programs, are ABC staff expected to 'make up the difference' by providing greater coverage to that party during the final weeks of the campaign just to get the share-of-voice figures to balance, regardless of news values?

No. The ABC does not use share-of-voice data in a strict mathematical way to determine balance or assess impartiality. The share-of-voice data is used as a broad indicator of where we might have to scrutinise ourselves and think through the reasons one major party appears to be getting significantly more time than the other. It is understood that there will often be unavoidable practical reasons for uneven figures, such as when any given party's representatives cannot be reached for comment or they decline to go on air for their own reasons. Such factors unavoidably affect the share-of-voice stats. By themselves, they are not evidence of partiality and if the count is read in a simplistic way it can mislead. However, people unfamiliar with media and political campaigns may mistakenly believe that balanced shares of voice equate to balance in the sense of substantive impartiality. So it is important that staff make and retain contemporaneous notes of unsuccessful efforts to provide candidates and party officials with time and of the reasons the opportunity was not or could not be taken up.

The ABC expects that the Editorial Policies will be upheld with particular care during election campaigns with the overarching aim of providing high quality coverage through:

- the reasoned application of news values;

- responsiveness to events and issues as and when they arise; and
- good-faith efforts fairly and accurately to obtain, scrutinise and convey the initiatives and responses of those vying for the electorate's confidence, especially those with a practical prospect of forming the next Government.

Three-cornered contest

Query

At the electorate level, do we still strive for balance among the major parties, even though two of them are in a coalition against the other?

In seats being contested by ALP, Liberal and National candidates, the ABC aims for balanced coverage of all three over the course of the campaign. This may have the effect of giving the Coalition parties combined more time than the ALP. The rationale is that, if elected, any of the three candidates will be in the party room of either the Government or the Opposition and, in a three-cornered contest, the voters have the option of choosing among the three of them.

Election blackout does not apply to the ABC *(inserted 19 November 2007)*

Query

Does the "election blackout" apply to the ABC in any way?

The ABC is **not** subject to the electronic media blackout that runs from midnight on the Wednesday before polling day until the end of polling on the Saturday.

The blackout period under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth)* bans community and commercial broadcasters from airing election advertisements. "Election advertisements" are defined to include paid broadcasts that are directed at soliciting votes for a candidate or commenting on a party or election issue.

This election advertising blackout does **not** apply to the ABC because:

- national broadcasters like the ABC are not in the list of broadcast licensees who are subject to the blackout provision; and, in any event,
- the ABC does not broadcast paid election advertisements.

The ABC's editorial coverage, including news, current affairs and set pieces like National Press Club events, is unaffected by the blackout.

Election broadcasts on the ABC - that is, the time the ABC makes available to the parties for campaign launches and 3-minute announcements created by the parties themselves - are regulated under the *ABC Act*, which does not expressly restrict or "black out" election matters on the ABC at any time.

[Further queries and guidance will be added over time]

ABC News - streaming and video on demand
2007 Federal Election

As part of its Federal election coverage ABC News will be delivering and publishing much more rich media (audio visual content) than it has in the past.

This document sets out the broad editorial principles applying to the delivery of rich media, principally video, during the course of the campaign. (The same principles however will apply to the delivery of audio services.)

The video offering will take two forms:

1. Live streaming of set piece events including media conferences, policy announcements and campaign launches.
2. Video-on-demand (VOD) style services in which edited highlights of the set piece events and other video which has NOT been streamed live will be made available for time-shifted viewing.

Live streaming:

ABC News will aim to stream live as many set pieces as possible during the course of the campaign. The decision on which events to stream will be based on a combination of news values; logistics and possible operational constraints.

In the event that an event is streamed live, ABC News will stream the event in its entirety. This acknowledges that there is an audience expectation that they will be able to watch the event in its entirety if they desire. It reinforces the principle of audience choice in the online environment. It also avoids the possibility that the ABC may inadvertently shut down the video stream before a particularly interesting or controversial point in the media conference and avoid suggestions that we may have selectively intervened.

It's proposed that the duration of live-streamed events will not be counted for the purposes of election oversight and monitoring. This acknowledges that the ABC will have no control over the duration and style of live-streamed events. As a result there is likely to be considerable variation in the duration of set-piece events. A media conference or announcement by one party may run for some time and the response, if it's available, may be much shorter. In some cases political parties may not respond to the streamed event with their own media conference. In other cases logistics and operational constraints may prevent the response from being streamed.

A log of live-streamed events will be maintained, including the number of events, their duration and the party involved, but it will not be part of the official internal or external count.

ABC News will aim to balance its live streaming services over the course of the campaign. Balance will be achieved via the normal processes of making editorial decisions about what events will be streamed, daily editorial review and by taking into account a combination of factors, including news values, logistics and a desire to present a range of views and parties as part of its streamed services.

ABC News will audit its log of live streamed services to ensure balance is achieved where possible in terms of the number of streamed events from the major parties.

Video On Demand:

In order to achieve balance and consistency in its video services, ABC News will provide an archive of video-on-demand material for time-shifted viewing. The archive will operate from the ABC's /elections site under the title "On the Record".

The overarching principles of the "On the Record" service are:

1. All live streamed events will have a corresponding VOD component.
2. VOD services will be counted both in terms of the number of items published during the course of the campaign, and the duration of each item.
3. VOD services will include highlights of the major points of the set piece typically amounting to no more than 10 minutes of the original duration, but on some occasions these packages may be longer, based on editorial judgements.
4. In some cases one party's response to an announcement may not be able to be streamed live for logistical reasons. It's therefore proposed video-on-demand of the corresponding event will be offered from On The Record, if it is available. The VOD service will generally be restricted to no more than 10 minutes of the original (non-streamed) media conference.
5. On The Record may also include video-on-demand on major policy announcements and interviews undertaken with minor party leaders. Again, set pieces made available for time-shifted viewing will be generally be no more than 10 minutes.
6. It's proposed that the VOD page be organised in a linear day-by-day archive.

Appendix 4 Schedule of Political Parties' Free Time Broadcasts, Radio and TV

Note: The Schedule was published on ABC Online in the following form. The major parties' launches were broadcast by ABC Radio and TV on 13 November (Coalition launch, Brisbane) and 14 November (ALP launch, Brisbane), with consequent adjustments to the schedule for others. The parties were advised in advance that these consequential adjustments would be unavoidable. A ballot, witnessed by party representatives, determined the order for scheduled slots.

Schedule of free time election broadcasts by eligible parties

Along with its comprehensive coverage of the federal election on radio, TV and online, the ABC offers free broadcast time to eligible parties to allow them to inform voters about policies.

As the national broadcaster, the ABC is committed to nourishing the 'national conversation', and that conversation rarely matters more than when the electorate is in the process of deciding who will govern.

The ABC provides an unrivalled breadth of services to metropolitan, regional, rural and remote communities of this vast country.

Over 75 years, we have covered more than two thirds of all elections since Federation in 1901.

The free time broadcasts may look a little different this year. Responding to feedback, we have changed our guidelines a bit to allow the political parties to use more of the communication techniques familiar to TV viewers.

But the ABC still insists on rational discourse. The guidelines prevent the parties from turning free time broadcasts into advertising. They must inform, not just emote. They may criticise the policies of opponents, but they cannot make personal attacks.

We want our facilitation of free time broadcasts by political parties to contribute meaningfully to the democratic process, and would welcome audience responses to the features of it that the ABC controls, such as format, timing and scheduling. (The content is not ours.)

Paul Chadwick
Chairman Election Coverage Review Committee

(Appendix 4 continued)

ABC TV

Date	TIME	PARTY	DURATION
30/10/07	18:50	ALP	3 mins
01/11/07	21:25	COALITION	3 mins
03/11/07	20:25	COALITION	3 mins
03/11/07	21:20	ALP	3 mins
06/11/07	18:50	DEMOCRATS	3 mins
08/11/07	18:50	ALP	3 mins
08/11/07	21:25	COALITION	3 mins
10/11/07	20:25	ALP	3 mins
10/11/07	21:20	COALITION	3 mins
13/11/07	18:50	ALP	3 mins
13/11/07	20:30	GREENS	3 mins
15/11/07	18:50	GREENS	3 mins
15/11/07	21:25	COALITION	3 mins
17/11/07	20:25	ALP	3 mins
17/11/07	21:20	COALITION	3 mins
20/11/07	18:50	FAMILY FIRST	3 mins

ABC RADIO

DATE	TIME	PARTY	DURATION
29/10/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins
30/10/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
31/10/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins
01/11/07	19.05	DEMOCRATS	3 mins
02/11/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins
05/11/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
06/11/07	19.05	GREENS	3 mins
07/11/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins
08/11/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
09/11/07	19.05	FAMILY FIRST	3 mins
12/11/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins
13/11/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
14/11/07	19.05	GREENS	3 mins
15/11/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
16/11/07	19.05	SPARE	3 mins
19/11/07	19.05	SPARE	3 mins
20/11/07	19.05	COALITION	3 mins
21/11/07	19.05	ALP	3 mins

1. Eligibility criteria available at http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/documents/election_campaigns.pdf and production guidelines at http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/documents/ABC_production_guidelines_free_broadcasts_political_parties.pdf
2. Dates for eligible parties' scheduled announcements were determined by a ballot attended by party representatives in Canberra on 19 October 2007.
3. Schedule may be subject to change. Any necessary change to any party's timeslot will be made fairly according to a process explained to all parties.
4. Major parties' launch dates yet to be advised.