

## External review of *Exposed: The Ghost Train Series*

An independent external review of *Exposed: The Ghost Train Series* has found the program performed "an important public service".

Conducted by Chris Masters and Rod Tiffen, and commissioned by the ABC, the review says EXPOSED "brings to life a major tragedy in Sydney's history. It brings together more than five dozen on-camera interviews and scours through a huge amount of documentary research on official transcripts and reports.

"This is a depth and breadth of research that very few television series achieve, and the result is much fresh, revealing and important material. Since its broadcast, there have been responses by the coroner and by the police, who are now offering a reward for information about the fire, and widespread calls in parliament and elsewhere for a new inquiry."

The review contains a critical opinion about one aspect of EXPOSED – an historical allegation regarding Neville Wran, to which ABC News has responded.

The ABC commissions external reviews from respected practitioners and subject specialists as an educative tool – because we strive to meet the highest standards. The ABC always looks for ways content can be better and values the insights of external reviewers.

External reviews are qualitative reviews, not compliance reviews or audits. Audience & Consumer Affairs investigated EXPOSED, including a complaint regarding Mr Wran, and found there was no breach of editorial standards.

EXPOSED focuses on the tragic deaths of six young boys and one man, who was the father of two of the boys; the involvement of corrupt senior NSW Police in the original investigation; and the inadequacies of the investigation that followed. It also conveys calls from families of the victims, as well as witnesses, magistrates, former investigators and judicial figures, for a fresh inquiry into the tragedy.

The review ultimately concludes that: "The program makers uncovered much suspicious evidence around arson being the cause of the fire, exposed the incompetence of the police investigation, reported on the inadequacies of earlier investigations, revealed the way policy making by the NSW government benefited Saffron, and the corrupt circle of influence around Saffron. They mounted a compelling case for a new investigation."

Following the meticulous investigative reporting by the EXPOSED team, an application seeking a fresh inquest into the Ghost Train fire was made to the NSW coroner; a majority of the Upper House of the NSW Parliament voted in support of an independent special commission of inquiry; the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Squad set up Strike Force Sedgeman to investigate the cause and origin of the fire at the direction of the Coroner; and NSW Police offered a \$1 million reward for new information regarding the fire.

The ABC is proud of *EXPOSED: The Ghost Train Fire* series and the talented, diligent, and hard-working team of journalists who made it.

The ABC thanks Chris Masters and Rod Tiffen for their work.