

ABC News welcomes the findings of Editorial Audit No. 1 relating to ABC Radio interviews with the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition during the 2013 Federal Election Campaign. We consider it a valuable addition to the analysis of how the ABC covered the campaign. We believe we can take the observations on board to ensure the ABC becomes even better at fulfilling its important role as a public broadcaster during future election campaigns.

We welcome the review's assessment that the ABC Radio interviews with the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader during the campaign were broadly fair, open-minded, relevant and in line with audience expectations. We particularly welcome the finding that the ABC achieved "due impartiality" across the selection of items (p9). We believe News' content – through the flagship program *AM* – was a substantial contribution to the corporation's coverage overall. In particular, we note *AM*'s role in providing key "set piece" interviews, one with each leader at the start, and then again at the end of the campaign period.

We note the commentary about preparation for live interviews and the suggestion that a question for one *AM* interview could have been "better framed to encourage an answer ... that would have more fairly and accurately informed the audience about the facts of the campaign" (p16). The example given is the August 5 interview with the Opposition Leader. This questioning was in part about opinion polls and Mr Abbott's relatively weak performance in personal standing compared with his party's strong poll numbers. ABC News agrees that issues and context are the primary focus of election reporting. Nevertheless an election is a contest, and a direct question about polling and the apparent preferences of the public is also appropriate in the cut-and-thrust of an election.

We also note the review's thoughts on the issue of breadth of subject matter in conducting political interviews across the ABC. The report makes the point (p33) that the ABC ought to consider ways to ensure a broad range of subjects is discussed during the political cycle. We welcome this suggestion and think that it would be a useful point to consider and discuss between all outlets and platforms ahead of the next political campaign.

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