

**From:** [Nick Leys](#)  
**To:** [Charlie Lewis](#); [pfray@crikey.com.au](mailto:pfray@crikey.com.au)  
**Cc:** [Sally Jackson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: ABC statement on EXPOSED  
**Date:** Monday, 30 August 2021 6:26:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Hi Charlie,

Why have you claimed the ABC leaked parts of the Exposed review to media when it should have been obvious we provided a statement to any journalist who asked us about it?

In fact your colleague asked us for a response this morning and we provided one (see below). Hardly leaking?

And why did you not provide us with a right of reply but instead ran a quote from The Australian?

Cheers

Nick

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**From:** Sally Jackson  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 August 2021 9:06 AM  
**To:** [gwilkins@crikey.com.au](mailto:gwilkins@crikey.com.au)  
**Subject:** ABC statement on EXPOSED

As discussed.

## 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 and describes its production values as “world class” and “exemplary”.

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. Reviews are not “pass/fail” tests for content. 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 cannot and do not investigate whether coverage has breached editorial standards. External reviews are qualitative reviews. They are 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.

Background information on the Wran material:

EXPOSED did not ‘accuse Wran of political corruption and a cover up’. Rather, it reported allegations.

The final episode of the Exposed program reported an historic allegation (being ‘Allegation 27’) regarding Neville Wran, Lionel Murphy, Morgan Ryan, Abe Saffron and the Luna Park lease. Allegation 27 came from the 1986 Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the conduct of Justice Lionel Murphy and was among the most serious of the 14 formal allegations the Inquiry was planning to pursue. Unfortunately Allegation 27 was never investigated to its conclusion, and has remained un-investigated, because the Inquiry was shut down in 1986 upon Justice Murphy’s sudden death.

Importantly, the Exposed program reported the claims regarding Mr Wran and Luna Park as an “allegation” (as well as being a “scenario” and not proven) no less than 10 times in the space of 20 minutes in the final episode.

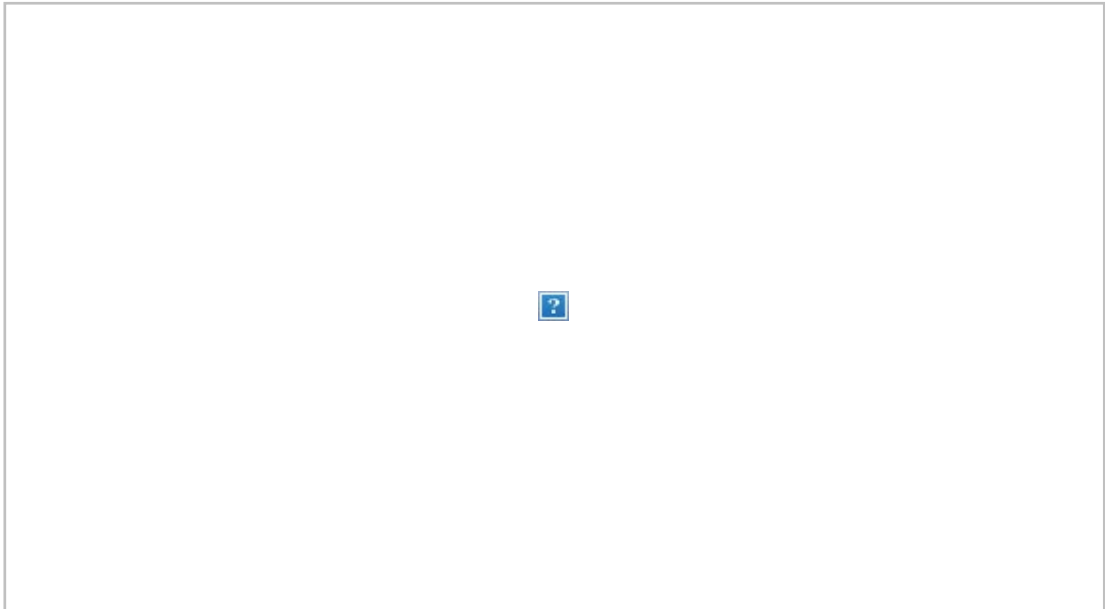
It’s also important to note that Exposed is not the first program or publication to report on the allegation about Mr Wran.

Specifically, Allegation 27 (and Mr Wran’s alleged involvement) was widely reported by multiple journalists and publications in 2017 including several articles in The Daily Telegraph, and also by The Australian, The Weekend Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Guardian, and The

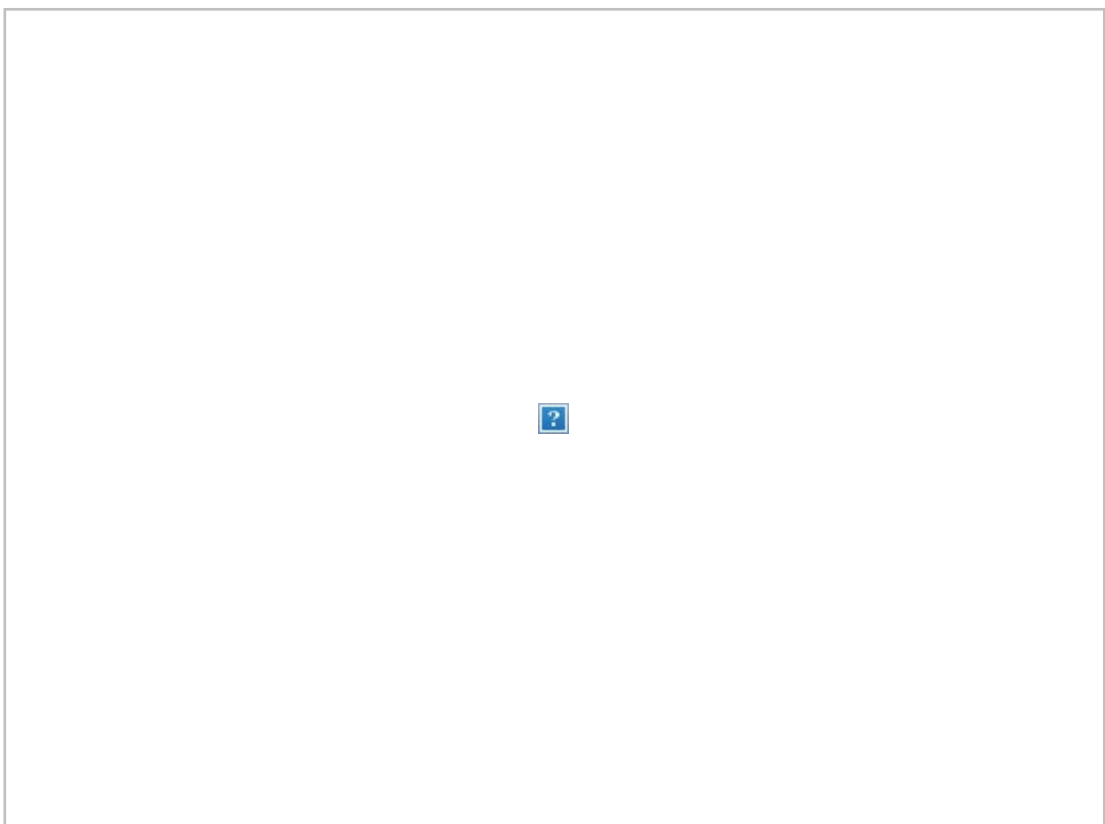
West Australian.

Several of these 2017 publications also pictured Mr Wran in relation to the allegation (just as Exposed did).

Here is an example from The Australian's coverage:



And this from the Sydney Morning Herald:



By way of another example, here is The Daily Telegraph in one of its 2017 reports:

*Murphy's inability to say "no" put Saffron at the centre of a powerful, if seedy, network of influence, a web of corrupt cops and crooked politicians.*

*It was Sydney in the '70s and early 1980s. A stinking dirty mess.*

*Problems with illegal gambling dens when the cops you were paying let you down? Have a word with Murphy. Want the lease over Luna Park? Ring Murphy, he will have a chat with then-NSW premier Neville "Nifty" Wran.*

The reporting and exploring of historic allegations that had already been widely reported by multiple journalists and publications several years before Exposed, does not constitute accusing Mr Wran of political corruption and a cover up.