



MEDIA RELEASE: Saturday, April 13, 2018

Hands Off Our ABC campaign comes to Warringah

Much-loved children's television characters the Bananas In Pyjamas will join other actors and performers today to remind Warringah voters of Tony Abbott's broken promise of "no cuts to the ABC".

B1 and B2 will be out and about in Manly as part of a push by the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance to ensure that the future of the ABC is a key issue in the federal election.

With the recent release of a damning Senate report into political interference in the ABC and an \$84 million funding cut locked in at the federal Budget, all candidates in Warringah must declare where they stand on the ABC's independence and funding, says MEAA chief executive Paul Murphy.

Performers, crew and musicians in MEAA are calling on candidates in Warringah to commit to restoring ABC funding to a sustainable level, respect the editorial and programming independence of the ABC, keep the ABC commercial free, and not privatise or commercialise any parts of the ABC.

The issue is particularly important in Warringah as the current federal member Tony Abbott oversaw massive cuts to the ABC in his first year as Prime Minister in 2014.

This came after he made a promise on national television on the eve of the 2013 election of "no cuts to the ABC or SBS".

"In 2013, Tony Abbott asked voters to trust him that he would not make any cuts to our public broadcasters, yet within a few months of coming to power, his government introduced cuts which have directly led to the loss of jobs, programs and services at the ABC," Mr Murphy said.

"Tony Abbott's government cut the ABC's base funding by more than \$250 million in its first year in office, and other cuts by the Coalition since then have taken that amount well over \$350 million. He has since admitted he broke a promise, but never apologised for it.

"As Prime Minister and as a backbencher, Mr Abbott has also been a constant critic of the ABC, accusing it of 'chronic bias' and of having an 'incurable left-liberal cultural position'. He has even described the ABC as un-Australian; in 2014, when Prime Minister, he said the broadcaster 'appears to take everybody's side but our own'."

"In Warringah, we will not be telling people how they should vote, but we will be seeking to inform them about the issues confronting the ABC and encourage them to support the candidate they most trust with our national broadcaster."

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance - the people who inform and entertain

📍 PO Box 723 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 ☎ 1300 656 513

BUILT ON INTEGRITY. POWERED BY CREATIVITY. MEAA.ORG