



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, January 22, 2024

ABC staff 'have lost confidence' in managing director

Union members at the ABC have today passed a vote of no confidence in managing director David Anderson for failing to defend the integrity of the ABC and its staff from outside attacks.

The vote was passed overwhelmingly at a national online meeting attended by more than 200 members of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

Union members have called on Mr Anderson to take immediate action to win back the confidence of staff following a series of incidents which have damaged the reputation of the ABC as a trusted and independent source of news.

Staff have put management on notice that if it does not begin to address the current crisis by next Monday, January 29, staff will consider further action.

The acting Chief Executive of MEAA, Adam Portelli, said staff had felt unsupported by the ABC's senior management when they have been criticised or attacked from outside.

"The message from staff today is clear and simple: David Anderson must demonstrate that he will take the necessary steps to win back the confidence of staff and the trust of the Australian public," he said.

"This is the result of a consistent pattern of behaviour by management when the ABC is under attack of buckling to outside pressure and leaving staff high and dry.

"Public trust in the ABC is being undermined. The organisation's reputation for frank and fearless journalism is being damaged by management's repeated lack of support for its staff when they are under attack from outside.

"Journalists at the ABC – particularly First Nations people, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds - increasingly don't feel safe at work; and the progress that has been made in diversifying the ABC has gone backwards.

"Up until now, the management response to this crisis has been superficial and today's motion of no confidence says that David Anderson is out of touch with the sentiment in the ABC's newsrooms.

"He needs to act quickly to win that confidence back by putting the integrity of the ABC's journalism above the impact of pressure from politicians, unaccountable lobby groups and big business.

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The full motion passed by MEAA members at today's meeting reads as follows:

MEAA members at the ABC have lost confidence in our managing director David Anderson. Our leaders have consistently failed to protect our ABC's independence or protect staff when they are attacked. They have consistently refused to work collaboratively with staff to uphold the standards that the Australian public need and expect of their ABC.

Winning staff and public confidence back will require senior management:

- 1. Backing journalism without fear or favour.*
- 2. Working collaboratively with unions to build a culturally informed process for supporting staff who face criticism and attack.*
- 3. Take urgent action on the lack of security and inequality that journalists of colour face.*
- 4. Working with unions to develop a clearer and fairer social media policy.*
- 5. Upholding a transparent complaints process, in which journalists who are subject to complaints are informed and supported.*

A further resolution passed unanimously by the meeting read:

MEAA members at the ABC will not continue to accept the failure of management to protect our colleagues and the public. If management does not work with us to urgently fix the ongoing crisis, ABC staff will take further action to take a stand for a safe, independent ABC.

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