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FREE TV SAYS OUTDATED BLACKOUT FOR PLEBISCITE HAS TO GO

Free TV has reiterated its call for an end to outdated advertising blackout periods and rejects the plan for a similar blackout in the *Plebiscite (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill 2016*.

Free TV Chairman Harold Mitchell AC said: "As we saw in the Federal Election, an advertising blackout period has no relevance and is ineffectual in the modern media landscape.

"Introducing another blackout period for the plebiscite that singles out commercial broadcasters is no longer appropriate in a converged media environment. It is one thing to have these ridiculous limitations in a piece of legislation that is 25 years old, but totally ridiculous to have it in a new piece of legislation. The Bill seems ignore the existence of the internet and continues to entrench the antiquated regulation of commercial television."

The blackout is a provision of the Broadcasting Services Act that was passed by the Parliament in 1992 prior to the introduction of pay TV and widespread internet access in Australia.

"The plebiscite blackout period will simply replicate what occurred during the election where both sides of the debate will simply transfer their advertising from television to digital media platforms and social media," Mr Mitchell said.

"We are calling on Parliament once again to get rid of this outdated provision which only serves to put commercial broadcasters at a disadvantage to all other digital media."

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