

Media Release
31 May 2021

Free TV urges reform path for vital broadcasting services in response to Green Paper

In a detailed response to the Government's Media Reform Green paper, Free TV Australia has today set out a roadmap for the future of commercial free-to-air television.

Free TV Chairman, Greg Hywood, said: "The Free TV industry has proposed a technology and regulatory pathway that recognises the central role that broadcast terrestrial free-to-air services currently play in the lives of Australians and the importance of ensuring they continue to be accessible to Australian communities.

"Free-to-air television delivers critical services that no other platform does – free, ubiquitous locally relevant viewing to all Australian homes.

"The upheaval in the media sector has only elevated the need for the strong and sustainable local services that people can go to for trusted news and public service information, to tune in to homegrown Australian stories and to watch iconic sporting events as a nation – no matter where they live or how much they earn. We need new rules for this new landscape but they need to be the right rules to ensure balance, quality, and accessibility for all Australians."

The Free TV [submission](#) outlines why reforms are critical to ensure the future quality of the TV technology platform, and a sustainable and competitive industry that can continue to deliver the social and cultural objectives of the Government.

Free TV believes the key reforms required include:

- prominence requirements so that Australians can easily find and use free-to-air broadcast channels and on-demand services in a connected environment;
- embedding the principles of net neutrality in the regulatory framework;
- the extension of anti-siphoning regulations to online platforms to ensure Australians are not forced to pay for the iconic sporting events they currently watch for free;
- fulfilling the Government's commitment to review the amount commercial networks pay for spectrum as the current tax is well in excess of international levels; and
- addressing the financial pressures affecting the sustainability of free-to-air television broadcasting in regional and remote areas.

While Free TV does not believe the initial proposals included in the Green Paper regarding long-term TV technology platforms are workable, it welcomes the Government's openness to other suggestions.



Free TV Chief Executive Officer, Bridget Fair, said: “Any proposal for regulatory or technology change should be measured by whether it will secure a strong future for commercial television over the next decade and beyond.

“Now is the time to start the conversation and lay the groundwork so that the right decisions to ensure a sustainable future of the Free TV industry can be made. It is critical that all Australians continue to have access to free and universally available television services into the future. We look forward to working with the Government to lock in the future of broadcast television for all Australians to enjoy”.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Bridget Fair
Chief Executive Officer
Free TV Australia
M: 0417 260 478
E: bfair@freetv.com.au

ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia’s commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, Prime Media Group, WIN Network and Imparja Television.