

Joint Media Release
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Australia's free-to-air television networks unite to call for urgent action to ensure Australians can access free local content services

Senior TV executives from the ABC, SBS, Seven, Nine and Ten are in Canberra over the next two days to demonstrate how urgent action is needed to ensure Australians can find free local TV services on their televisions.

Greg Hywood, Free TV Chair said, "Free local TV services remain vital for millions of Australians. Our programming entertains, informs with trusted news and critical emergency updates, and excites with the unmatched theatre of live and free sport.

"But Australians are finding it increasingly hard to find these free local services on modern TV sets. TV manufacturers are seeking to profit by selling exclusive access to the key positions on the home screens and on remote controls. This means global subscription services like Netflix and Amazon are given preference on home screens and remotes, while local TV services are forced to pay to even be available on TVs.

"This might be a great deal for TV manufacturers, but it's a terrible deal for Australians who just want to get their trusted local news services, watch the Matildas smash the opposition or sit back and enjoy the thousands of hours of great local entertainment and drama programming, all available for free to every Australian," Mr Hywood said.

Bridget Fair, Free TV CEO said, "The good news for Australian viewers is that a key election commitment of the Albanese Government was to legislate a new prominence framework that would ensure that free local TV services are easy for Australians to find.

"This plan is widely supported in the community, with independent RMIT research showing that 57% of Australians want free local TV services pre-installed on TVs," Ms Fair said.

ABC Managing Director, David Anderson said: "Australians need to be able to easily access free local content; it is important to all of us as a nation. Manufacturers of Smart TVs need to distribute them locally as FTA access ready. Australians are increasingly missing out.

"That's why the whole local TV industry has come together in Canberra this week to build support across the Parliament and reinforce how critical it is that action is needed now," Mr Anderson said.

The simple solution is for new rules to be created that require that TV manufacturers:

- Include access to all TV channels provided by our free local networks
- Install all local TV apps in the first positions on home screens
- Offer free local TV content first in search results and recommendations

SBS Managing Director, James Taylor said: "Together with our colleagues from the ABC, Seven, Nine and Ten, we are urging policymakers and industry stakeholders to work together to ensure that Australians can easily find and enjoy the content that tells Australian stories and strengthens our sense of community.



“Other countries have already taken significant steps to ensure the visibility and accessibility of their local TV service and we urge the Government to deliver on its commitment to do the same,” Mr Taylor said.

For more information and short video on how to make free local TV services easy for all Australians to find, visit freetv.com.au

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