



AUSTRALIA

Media Release
20 November 2023

Don't Let Big Tech Take Your Free Away

Free TV Australia has today launched a new campaign aimed at highlighting the challenge with finding free local television services on connected TVs.

Global deals between TV manufacturers and international streaming giants have given global subscription services the most prominent positions on home screens and remote controls, while local TV services are difficult or sometimes impossible to find.

The campaign, "Don't Let Big Tech Take Your Free Away", will include TV ads on all commercial free-to-air television networks and will highlight the importance of the Federal Government introducing legislation to ensure people can easily find their local free TV channels.

Free TV channels are asking the Federal Government to introduce new laws that require manufacturers to provide free of charge:

- Access to all TV channels provided by Australia's free local networks,
- Installation of all local TV apps in the first positions on home screens, and
- Free local TV content first in search results and recommendations.

Free TV Australia CEO, Bridget Fair, said the campaign aims to increase exposure to this issue, particularly given increasing cost of living challenges faced by all Australians.

"Free local TV services bring our communities together – it doesn't matter where we live, or how much we earn, free TV entertains, informs and unites all Australians," said Ms Fair.

"Free local TV services are there for Australians when the chips are down. They bring us together for our greatest sporting moments, provide trusted news and current affairs and keep us safe with critical emergency warnings and updates in times of crisis. They also provide thousands of hours of Australian drama, documentary and entertainment programming watched by millions every single day.

"But these local TV services are disappearing before our eyes. The TV manufacturers are now demanding free local TV services pay large amounts – up to 30 per cent of their revenue – to even be included on their screens or in the app store. That money would come directly out of Australian content."

Ms Fair said that would mean it would be increasingly difficult to find free to air channels on TVs going forward.

“Pay TV providers want you to pay. They want you to pay for content that is often available free on free to air channels and their free corresponding apps. 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, cheer on their footy team or sit back and enjoy the thousands of hours of great local entertainment and drama programming, all available for free to every Australian,” she said.

“Claims by some pay TV providers that the Government is trying to control your viewing or limit search results are utterly misleading. This whole issue is about putting the viewer in full control, not being served up incomplete viewing choices based on who has paid the most money to be in the line-up.

“Free TV has never sought a prominence framework that locks in apps on the home screen. Viewers should be given a full choice of all services available to them, both free and paid, and then be able to choose which ones they want to watch. That is what a prominence framework will do – give the consumer the choice,” said Ms Fair.

To protect Australian stories and the services that make them and to continue experiencing moments like the Matildas’ stunning FIFA Women’s World Cup campaign, Ms Fair said the Government needs to protect Australians’ ability to find them.

Further information is available at freeforeveryone.com.au

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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, WIN Network and Imparja Television.