

Impartiality and commercial influence in broadcast news - consultation 02/2020

My submission is very basic and does not go into details.

I am a retired photographer and ex service veteran.

I have worked with news and media outlets during my working life.

I take an active interest in news and current affairs.

My main complaints are that the current news services have become both avenues for reporting commercial products as news content and more disturbingly as biased and partisan supporters of political parties and agendas.

=====

Some commercial news are less affected by these issues, other broadcasts are totally and shamelessly politically biased, "Opinion" is presented as news and has no connection with facts, evidence or reality. There is no balanced or opposing views ever presented, other than the occasional "Guest" who is then interrogated and ridiculed.

We need to have fair and unbiased news reporting on all free to air TV stations, facts need to be checked and supported by evidence.

Opinions while valid need to show supporting evidence and have fair and reasonable time for opposing ideas.

If a subject like Climate Change has 99% of scientific support and is backed by facts evidence and science then it needs to be presented as such not by 99% of the coverage being climate denialism and misrepresentation, lies and fake news.

The same with political bias, major parties need to have their policies successes and failures reported on in an honest and unbiased manner, opinion pieces need to be balanced and give time to discuss the facts and the evidence.

Censorship of the political news and reporting is not acceptable in any way.

This was recently highlighted by the way the news story of people in Cobargo refused to shake hands with our PM Mr Morrison, some news outlets reported the story honestly and fully, others censored the parts when fire victims rejected the handshake of the PM and the PM just walked away from them, later appearing to run away from them.

This is one small incident kind of censorship of important news is totally unacceptable, one party will be praised and their mistakes minimised the other side of politics will have their mistakes vilified and their achievements ignored.

=====

Commercialization of the news where products or services are presented as news stories, often in deals that seem to be done in exchange for advertising contracts, is unacceptable.

If a company has a commercial contract or interest in any company then that must be disclosed openly and honestly to anyone watching the segment, preferably this should not happen at all.

Advertising is not news and news is not advertising.

=====

In closing we need to have an open efficient impartial and effective media watchdog to make and enforce rules and laws regarding how news is presented.

Media stations need to be unbiased and to be seen to be unbiased.

Facts need to be checked and if errors are made they are reported and corrected.

If a company persist in failing to meet standards then penalties need to be applied.

As a country we simply cannot afford to lose news services that we can trust.

Yours

Doug Steley