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Australian Communications and Media Authority

Media release

Four Corners breaches impartiality requirements in War Memorial story

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has found that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) breached its impartiality obligations in a *Four Corners* episode about the redevelopment of the Australian War Memorial.

The ACMA investigation found that the 10 March 2025 *Four Corners* episode 'Sacrifice' unduly favoured one perspective through its presentation of the findings of an Australian National Audit Office report, its analysis of the redevelopment consultation process and its selection and treatment of interviewees.

ACMA Chair Nerida O'Loughlin said the ACMA recognises that investigative journalism can take a variety of approaches, but *Four Corners* must also comply with the impartiality obligations under the ABC Code of Practice.

"Investigative journalism plays an important role in scrutinising matters in the public interest. However, the ABC must present contentious issues with due impartiality and provide audiences with sufficient context," Ms O'Loughlin said.

"The cumulative effect of the program's framing, its use of strong and emotive language and its selection and differing treatment of interviewees was that it unduly favoured critics of the redevelopment."

The investigation found that the program accurately reported the Australian National Audit Office's overall conclusion that management of the redevelopment project was "largely effective". However, the program did not adequately explain the findings supporting that conclusion and instead predominantly focused on the deficiencies identified in the report.

The ACMA also found that the way the different stages of the redevelopment consultation process were portrayed was likely to leave viewers with the impression that the Australian War Memorial director's claims were inaccurate, when the director and the interviewer were referring to different stages of the consultation.

The episode did not breach the Code's accuracy requirements in relation to a complaint about its use of Last Post audio alongside construction audio. The ACMA found that an ordinary reasonable viewer would have understood that these audio tracks were sourced separately and would not have interpreted the events as having occurred simultaneously.

This is the second ACMA finding this year that a *Four Corners* program breached the ABC Code of Practice. In March, the ACMA published its finding that the 2024 'Water Grab' episode breached the Code's accuracy and impartiality requirements.

The ABC has advised that it disagrees with the ACMA's finding in relation to the 'Sacrifice' episode and does not propose to take any remedial action. The ACMA is considering the regulatory

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response available to it, noting that under the broadcasting legislation it may recommend but cannot compel the ABC to take remedial action for a breach of its Code.

Given the ABC's position and in the interests of transparency, the ACMA has published the ABC's submission alongside the investigation report.

For more information, please contact ACMA Media on 0438 375 776 or media@acma.gov.au.