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Australian Communications and Media Authority

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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 aspects of the Memorial's redevelopment project. This included findings of an Australian National Audit Office report, analysis of the redevelopment consultation process and the selection and treatment of interviewees.

ACMA Chair Nerida O'Loughlin said 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.

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

The investigation found that the program did not adequately explain the findings from an audit by the Australian National Audit Office and predominantly focused on the deficiencies. It also conflated different stages of the redevelopment consultation process which was likely to leave viewers confused as to the accuracy of the claims by the Memorial director.

The episode did not breach the Code's accuracy requirements in relation to a complaint about the use of *Last Post* audio in conjunction with footage and sounds of construction work.

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.

"It is disappointing that the ABC chooses to regularly dispute the findings of the regulator when we stand in place of ordinary reasonable viewers in assessing its compliance with its Code. Instead, we would expect the ABC to take on board our findings and consider any improvements it should make in response," Ms O'Loughlin said.

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The ACMA is considering whether to exercise any formal regulatory response to the breaches. Under the broadcasting legislation the ACMA may recommend but cannot compel the ABC to take remedial action for a breach of its Code.

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