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## **ABC staff agreement reached against backdrop of heavy cuts and increased work intensification**

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance — the union representing journalists and other editorial staff at the ABC — welcomes the finalisation of bargaining at the national broadcaster following an overwhelming vote this week in favour a new collective agreement.

The agreement approved by a record number of ABC employees will deliver a pay rise of 2% per annum for three years and some modest improvements to conditions, including parental leave, domestic violence leave and casual loadings.

MEAA chief executive officer Paul Murphy congratulated members at the ABC for standing together over many months of negotiations to ensure their employment conditions keep up with industry standards.

He said the outcome also reaffirmed the independence of the ABC as a statutory corporation from the government of the day.

“It’s important to note that this agreement has been reached against a backdrop of deep cuts to staff numbers and resources at the ABC, and an environment of increased work intensification,” he said.

“ABC journalists and editorial staff have more than delivered higher productivity in these difficult conditions, continuing to produce high quality and independent news and current affairs content and programming.

“These productivity improvements include filming their own work as video-journalists, filing in a cross-platform environment including intensive live reporting and social media obligations, desktop editing their own video work, regularly working excessive hours to meet heavy deadlines, restrictions on travel and overtime, and even providing their own equipment – cameras, smartphones, iPads – in order to meet work demands.

“The number of nominations received by the ABC at last week’s Walkley Awards announcement is testament to the hard work of editorial staff.”

Murphy said MEAA members had accepted some trade-offs to reach agreement with management, but ultimately did not go ahead with industrial action to ensure there was no disruption to important programs and services delivered to the Australian public.

He added that MEAA rejected criticism from the Public Service Commission that the deal breached the government’s workplace bargaining policy.

“The ABC is an independent statutory corporation with its own board and management. This independence is enshrined in the ABC charter.

“How the ABC conducts its employee relations is correctly a matter purely for the ABC without outside political interference.

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“At all times, our intention has been to secure the best possible working conditions for our members through direct negotiation with the management of the ABC.

“These have been tough negotiations with some wins and losses by both sides, but at the end of the day we have an agreement that has been put to a vote and accepted, and we expect it to be registered by the Fair Work Commission as soon as possible so our members can get on with their jobs.”

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**The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance - the people who inform and entertain**