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Hands Off Our ABC campaign in Wentworth

Much-loved children's television characters the Bananas In Pyjamas and long-running *Playschool* host Benita Collings will join other actors and performers today to inform Wentworth voters about the threats to the ABC ahead of this month's by-election.

B1 and B2 will be out and about in Paddington and Bondi today as part of a push by the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance to ensure that the future of the ABC is a key issue in the October 20 by-election.

With the ABC leadership crisis still unresolved and several investigations underway into whether former chairman Justin Milne sought to intervene in ABC editorial operations on behalf of the federal Coalition government, all candidates in Wentworth must declare where they stand on the ABC's independence and funding, says MEAA chief executive Paul Murphy.

MEAA is calling on candidates in Wentworth to commit to restoring ABC funding to a sustainable level, respecting the editorial and programming independence of the ABC, keep the ABC commercial free, and not privatise or commercialise any parts of the ABC.

The community action will be taking place as the Tasmanian Liberal state council debates a resolution to sell off the ABC this weekend.

"As our members demonstrated through their spontaneous action which led to the resignation of Justin Milne last week, the independence of the ABC must be sacrosanct from any political interference," Mr Murphy said.

"We know that the vast majority of Australians feel the same way, but unfortunately political interference is just one of the threats to the ABC.

"Hundreds of millions of dollars of funding has been cut in the past few years, resulting in more than 1000 job losses, and as recently as June the Liberal federal council voted 4:1 in favour of privatising the ABC.

"In Wentworth, we will not be telling people how they should vote, but we will be seeking to inform them about the issues confronting the ABC and encourage them to support the candidate they most trust with our national broadcaster."

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

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