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## **Labor announcement on ABC funding a good start**

The federal opposition's announcement that it would restore the \$83.7 million cut from the ABC at this year's Budget is a good first step towards reversing the damage from a succession of funding cuts since 2014, says the union representing ABC news and current affairs employees.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance welcomes the announcement from Opposition Leader Bill Shorten that a Labor government would not proceed with the funding indexation freeze which effectively cuts \$83.7 million from the ABC over three years from 2018-19.

If carried out, this latest reduction would take to almost \$340 million the total cut from the ABC's base funding since 2014. This has had a significant impact on ABC news, on television drama, and on radio programming, and there needs to be a major reinvestment in the ABC by the federal government.

"We are pleased with the announcement by the federal opposition and urge the Turnbull government to reconsider the short-sighted cuts in this year's Budget," said MEAA chief executive Paul Murphy.

"ABC executives have warned that the \$84 million cut in last month's Budget cannot be absorbed through more efficiencies, but can only come from cuts to programming, services and operational staff, such as journalists.

"ABC news staff were already going through another painful round of redundancies with 20 jobs to be axed when the cut was announced.

"Put simply, the ABC is doing more with less than ever before, and the latest cut was especially vindictive.

"While we welcome Labor's commitment not to go ahead with the funding freeze if elected at the next election, we will be looking for further concrete pledges of increased funding from all political parties.

"We will also continue to press all political parties to respect the independence of the ABC and reinforce the integrity of its charter to be the national broadcaster for all Australians."

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