



# Media Release

Monday, 31 May 2021

## Seven welcomes media reform green paper

The Seven Network today welcomed the Morrison Government's *Media Reform Green Paper: Modernising Television Regulation In Australia* as an important step forward in creating a new regulatory framework for the free-to-air television industry.

In its submission in response to the Green Paper, Seven says the document has started an important conversation about the future of the industry and has provided a platform for constructive industry and government engagement to ensure a vibrant and exciting future for Australian free-to-air television.

Seven West Media Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, James Warburton, said: "Seven's future is built on a multi-screen and multi carriage strategy, and the Green Paper starts the discussion about the future regulatory environment we and the industry need.

"The Green Paper proposes a new broadcast licensing scheme under which broadcasters could surrender spectrum in exchange for spectrum tax relief. The current proposal is like asking telecommunications companies to stop their technology innovation at 5G with no ability to upgrade to 6G and beyond. We think there is a better path.

"We support the Free TV Australia submission that outlines why the new broadcast licensing scheme needs to be discussed and reviewed, and we are happy to support the process of looking at achieving a dividend without surrendering services," he said.

"Conversations focused just on live linear TV don't reflect the TV business of today. This review of the regulatory model for free-to-air TV is an important opportunity to shape the future of Australian television businesses by reflecting how modern Australia consumes content."

"Delivering our content via spectrum will remain at the heart of our business model for the foreseeable future, but supplementary to this is the digital and IP growth engine. It isn't an either/or proposition. Increasingly, the content of the free-to-air networks will be distributed through different technologies and found on various screen types and sizes. The regulatory environment needs to reflect this so that our content remains freely accessible to all Australians," Mr Warburton said.

The Seven submission argues that the immediate regulatory priorities to address the challenges presented by the growth of online content viewing are:

- **Regulated prominence:** Commercial free-to-air TV delivers trusted and verified news, Australian stories and sport. This content is important for our national identity. However, as television screens become more cluttered with digital menus, preloaded apps and the new advertising business models of original equipment manufacturers, free-to-air services are becoming less visible and less



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accessible. As the regulatory framework evolves, it is important that commercial free-to-air services are easily accessible and prominent at no cost.

- **Legislatively embedding net neutrality:** Online TV is part of how Australians want to consume their content. NBN and telecommunications retail service providers should be prohibited from discriminating between different online businesses which can pay for higher quality of service or priority carriage.
- **Addressing the anti-siphoning framework:** The importance of universal access to free sport cannot be understated. Sport is an essential part of Australian culture. It is crucial that the regulatory framework is extended to online video platforms to ensure all Australians continue to have access to free sports and they are not locked behind a paywall. Further, Seven submits the list should accommodate a multi-screen environment. Listed sports that are broadcast on linear TV should also be made available for free through a broadcaster's online services without the need for separate licensing.
- **An immediate review of the spectrum tax:** Commercial free-to-air should not be paying more than the Government's administrative costs.

## For more information, please contact:

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## About Seven West Media

Seven West Media (ASX: SWM) is one of Australia's most prominent media companies, with a market-leading presence in content production across broadcast television, publishing and digital.

The company is home to some of Australia's most renowned media businesses, including the Seven Network and its affiliate channels 7two, 7mate, 7flix; broadcast video on demand platform 7plus; 7NEWS.com.au; The West Australian; and The Sunday Times. With iconic brands such as Australia's leading news and breakfast programs **7NEWS** and **Sunrise**, **Big Brother**, **SAS Australia**, **Farmer Wants A Wife**, **The Voice**, **Dancing With The Stars: All Stars**, **Home and Away** and **Better Homes and Gardens**, Seven West Media is also the broadcast partner of the AFL, Cricket Australia, Supercars and the Olympics.