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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **ABC Chair and Ita Buttrose**

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Ita Buttrose may well be “an extraordinary Australian” as Scott Morrison suggests, but the manner of her appointment will undermine her ability to stand up to threats to the ABC’s independence and integrity.

The ABC is Australia’s most important cultural institution, not the plaything of politicians, and voters cannot be confident it will be able to resist partisan pressure in the future if the key elements of its appointment procedure have been ignored.

According to authoritative reports, Ms Buttrose is all but assured of being named ABC Chair even though she was not on the shortlist recommended by the independent nomination panel nor on the list presented to the panel by the recruitment firm appointed by the government.

The danger is that, however, well intentioned Ms Buttrose may be her tenure would always be seen through the prism of her partisan appointment.

This is not what Australia needs with a federal election campaign now just weeks away.

Consultation with the Opposition Leader appears to have been non-existent or cursory at best.

After the sacking of Michelle Guthrie as Managing Director and Justin Milne as Chair last year amid allegations of political interference, the government ought to have been even more scrupulous in ensuring public confidence in the ABC’s independence, integrity and confidence.

It would have helped had the parliament supported my legislation [Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Appointment of Directors) Bill 2018] which provides for a series of reasonable checks and balances to guarantee independence in the process for appointing the Chair and non-executive members of the ABC Board.

**Further Information – Jim Middleton on 0418 627 066**