



Leader of the Opposition

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I write in relation to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) decision to cease its shortwave transmission service in the Northern Territory from 31 January 2017.

My letter follows repeated representations from members of my Shadow Ministry, Northern Territory Caucus and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs Senator Nigel Scullion to secure the continuation of this vital service.

As you know, shortwave radio provides vital news and information services, including local radio and emergency messages that are crucial to those living in remote areas, particularly in time of natural disaster.

The ABC's claim that the majority of listeners will be able to access ABC services via AM/FM radio, digital radio and online streaming, or via VAST platform does not account for the reality of service availability in remote areas.

This helps to explain why listeners and users of the ABC shortwave in the Northern Territory have been unequivocal in voicing their concern at the Coalition's failure to intervene in this matter. This includes emergency services workers and cattle growers.

I am also deeply concerned that the ABC took this decision without satisfactory consultation with affected listeners, community representatives and emergency service workers and agencies. ABC Managing Director, Michelle Guthrie, has since acknowledged shortfalls in this regard.

For these reasons I ask that you work with Labor, ABC management and local stakeholders as a matter of urgency to ensure the continued provision of shortwave radio service in the NT beyond 31 January 2017.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Shorten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bill" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Shorten".

Bill Shorten MP

Leader of the Opposition

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

26 January 2017

cc: The Hon Mark Dreyfus MP, QC
Mr Stephen Jones MP
Senator Malarndirri McCarthy
Hon Warren Snowdon MP
Mr Luke Gosling OAM, MP
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion