# Complaint to ABC re Media Watch episode 3 February 2020

## email 26 February 2020

*'My reason for complaint is the program’s bias and infatuation with climate change.  This was evidenced by avoidance of reference to key information, inaccurate representation of facts, false analyses, unsubstantiated comments, misleading statements and suspect conclusions.*

*In every such case Media Watch sought to present as fact an as yet unproven hypothesis: that the fires were caused by climate change.  Yet it failed to identify any of 3 facts reported in the media which warn against that conclusion at this time:*

*1. CSIRO had reported that the attribution of specific fires to climate change had not been done (it is underway)*

*2. the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner had said climate change was included in his organisation's plans for at least the past decade*

*3. Ramesh Thakur, former Assistant Secretary General of the UN had said bushfires were not all about climate change and that international action was needed to influence climate change.*

*The further conclusion Media Watch virtually invited its audience to draw is the Commonwealth, being responsible for policies that do not adequately address the avoidable causes of climate change, is blameworthy for the fires.  Such a conclusion is insupportable even if the fires were caused entirely by avoidable climate change.*

*On my reading the program breached the ABC Code: part 2 principles and the standards 2.1 and 2.2; part 4 principles and the standards 4.1 to 4.5 inclusive.*

*This bias has serious deleterious consequences extending beyond the reputation of the program and the ABC.*

*It diminishes the accountability of relevant parties - the States - thereby setting the stage for further similar disasters.*

*Worse, it creates confusion and supports an environment of unwarranted fear in the community about a ‘climate emergency’, and demands for Commonwealth responses.  This directly motivates the Commonwealth Government to seek to extend its powers in an unpredictable fashion and extent, not limited to addressing causes of climate change.*

*That the Commonwealth should not be accorded such reasons should be evident to all, especially the media, after, for example, recent Federal police raids on media outlets and journalists.  The arrogation by, or provision of new powers to, the Government – as distinct from Parliament – is likely to be an issue for the recently announced Royal Commission.*

*I forwarded two articles detailing the matter to Media Watch, seeking comments, on Tuesday 18 February 2020.*

*While no response has been received, Media Watch provided an ‘update’ of its bushfires/climate change opinions on 24 February.  To me this indicates the program has had sufficient time to consider the issues raised in the articles, however, I leave open the issue of compliance with ABC code part 3.*

*I am happy to forward those articles to you, if you tell me how*

*Thanking you for your attention'*

Regards