



SENATOR CLAIRE CHANDLER

Liberal Senator for Tasmania
Shadow Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Ita Buttrose AC OBE
Chair
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
GPO Box 9994
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Buttrose

I write in relation to the ABC article of 27 April 2022 *'Trans women's participation in sport has been framed as an election issue. This is what some trans athletes think'* which has been found by your Audience and Consumer Affairs division to be materially misleading and to have breached the ABC's standards for accuracy and impartiality.

I am sure you will agree that it is quite a failure of editorial process to publish an article stating that *"little airtime has been given to examining the science behind the claims being made"* which then proceeds to mislead audiences by omitting the science in question.

Despite the damning findings by the Audience and Consumer Affairs division, the article remains online and continues to contain basic errors of fact and omission. It appears that despite the unequivocal findings that the article is misleading, the ABC's news division remains content to mislead its audience on this issue.

I hope you agree that it is important to get to the bottom of how this disappointing situation occurred. To that end, I encourage the ABC board and management to investigate:

- Why the author chose not to reference peer-reviewed research on the specific subject of retained male advantage, or interview the authors of such research;
- Why the author did not interview experts involved in the creation of the World Rugby policy or the FINA policy;
- Why the article links to Tweets, rather than to publicly available scientific research;
- Why the author neither sought the views of female athletes, or reported the many statements from high-profile female athletes in support of single-sex sport;
- How none of the shortcomings above were picked up by editorial processes before the article was published on April 27;
- Why the ABC has not adequately corrected the above issues following the finding that the article was materially misleading and omits references to the relevant research;

- Why the author did not make corrections after being alerted to these errors after the April 27 publication;
- Why the updated article falsely claims that “in some cases, transgender women have been banned from competition entirely”, citing World Rugby and UCI policies. Policies which require participants to compete in the appropriate sex category do not mean anyone is “banned from competition entirely”.
- Whether the ABC’s affiliations with lobby groups and participation in award programs influenced the framing of this article.

I would suggest that this series of errors and breaches of standards could only have occurred in circumstances where the author set out to make a pre-determined case, selected interviewees to support their own position, and purposefully omitted relevant facts which demonstrate that there is substantial evidence that trans women retain performance advantages as a result of male puberty.

I would particularly encourage the ABC to reflect on the finding that relevant research indicates that trans women retain physical advantages over females. Now that the ABC concedes that this is the case, I trust that future coverage of this issue will no longer reflect such a hostile stance towards women who are aware of this fact.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Claire Chandler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Claire Chandler
Liberal Senator for Tasmania