

Council Meeting

Agenda item 7.2

30 June 2020

Notice of Motion: Cr Reece: Save Community TV in Melbourne, Channel 31

Motion

That Council:

1. Declares its support for community television station Channel 31 and the 1,000 people who are employed and volunteer at the station each week.
2. Recognises Channel 31 as a vital community media outlet in Melbourne and Geelong which provides an important community service and has been a training ground for thousands of people working in the creative industries.
3. Notes that at a time when media outlets are closing in record numbers and workers in creative industries are amongst the worst hit by the coronavirus, this is worst time to be closing Channel 31.
4. Calls on the Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Commonwealth Minister for Communications Paul Fletcher to act immediately to save Channel 31 by not terminating its broadcast licence on 30 June.
5. Requests the Lord Mayor and/or CEO write to the Minister for Communications and Secretary of the Department of Communications and Arts to ask that Channel 31 have its broadcast licence extended.

Background

On 30 June 2020 the Morrison Government plans to terminate the broadcasting of community TV in Australia. For Melbourne this means the loss from the airwaves of community TV station Channel 31 after 25 years of broadcasting.

Located on William Street in Melbourne's CBD, Channel 31 has around 1,000 employees and volunteers who work on its broadcasts each week.

This is not a Budget savings measure. Unlike the ABC and SBS, community TV is not government funded.

Channel 31 has been a training ground for aspiring broadcasters, producers, sound engineers, directors and screenwriters. It has helped launch the careers of TV personalities who are now household names.

During the coronavirus lockdown, Channel 31 has broadcast live-to-air religious services. The Greek Orthodox Parish, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Victorian Board of Imams and the Victorian Sikh Gurdwaras Council have all utilised the Channel 31.

The Government has not announced any plans for the use of the broadcast spectrum used by Channel 31. This means when it is switched off it will be replaced by nothing but white noise.

Mover: Cr Nicholas Reece

Seconder: Cr Jackie Watts