



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for Communications
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Statement on Stan Grant

On Monday night, Stan Grant, a respected and awarded journalist, hosted his final episode of Q+A before stepping down, following coverage of the coronation of King Charles III.

Today, the ABC will appear before Senate Estimates where this development may be examined.

Mr Grant, indeed no one at all, should be threatened or racially abused for doing their job.

All workers, including ABC journalists, deserve to feel welcomed, included, supported and safe in the workplace.

Our society values freedom of expression and the contest of ideas, and criticism of public figures and institutions, including the media, is par for the course. This underpins democracy.

But freedom of expression is not absolute and we draw the line at harmful speech, including racism and vilification, defamation and adult cyber-abuse.

Formal complaints mechanisms exist for Australians who don't like what they see, hear or read in the media, or on social media.

Certain minority groups in Australia suffer a disproportionate level of abuse and that, in the online environment, can spread faster and further than in the offline environment, magnifying its impacts.

First Nations Australians are already more likely to experience online abuse, and experience online hate speech at more than double the national average.

The impact of social media on civil discourse, and the media itself, is still being understood as it continues to evolve. To that end, the Government acknowledges the ABC's response which is based on a recommendation from the Bonner Committee.

For its part, the Albanese Government has committed to bring forward the statutory review the Online Safety Act so it occurs within this term of Government, and we will legislate to empower the ACMA to hold digital platforms to account in relation to mis- and disinformation online.

I have long called for more to be done in relation to hate speech online and am actively working across Government to strengthen protections in this area.

Where digital platforms and media companies can do more to support respectful debate – they should. It is clear this view is widely held across the Parliament.

MEDIA RELEASE

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