

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities
and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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Albo has the empty political promises blues

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese turned up at Bluesfest yesterday with an empty promise to “support the arts”.

It stands in stark contrast to the practical support for the arts already delivered by the Morrison Government. Our COVID-specific arts support stands at \$500 million -- including a grant of \$2.4 million for Bluesfest 2022 under our \$220 million RISE fund, which is supporting arts and entertainment events around the country.

“Bluesfest organisers told me during my visit to this iconic Australian music festival on Saturday that the RISE grant was critical to Bluesfest going ahead in 2022, after it was cancelled in 2020 and 2021,” Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP said.

“The best Mr Albanese had to offer was a pledge to support Australian music by ‘commissioning the ABC to undertake a feasibility study into the expansion of Double J on radio.’

“Under its governing legislation the ABC has operational independence from Government. Attempting to micromanage operational decisions such as the appropriate platforms for the ABC’s various services would constitute an extraordinary incursion upon its independence.

“Does Mr Albanese not realise that this is a promise he could not deliver without compromising the independence of both the ABC and the Australian Communications and Media Authority?”

“Did Mr Albanese not consult his Shadow Communications Minister, who as recently as February said the ABC and SBS are not subject to direction by, or on behalf of, the government?”

“It would be a decision for the ABC, not Government, to apply for an analogue FM radio licence to broadcast Double J.

“Similarly, the decision to allocate FM licences is one for the Australian Communications and Media Authority, an independent statutory authority, not for government.”

Labor yet again shows they have no idea and no plan. Only the Coalition Government has a plan to build a strong economy and a stronger future for Australia.

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