

21st Century Fox/Sky merger inquiry

Summary of substantive confidential submissions in response to the issues statement

The CMA received a further three substantive submissions which were marked as confidential. These three submissions put forward the following broad views:

Genuine commitment to broadcasting standards

- Each submission presented evidence that the media enterprises owned by the Murdoch family have not acted with integrity or in compliance with the spirit of the applicable regulatory regime. It was argued that if the merger was permitted to go ahead, these media enterprises would prioritise commercial gain over effective corporate governance and compliance processes. One of the submissions stated that they cannot be confident that the Murdoch family will have a genuine commitment to meeting broadcasting standards.
- The submissions give examples where governance principles had been overlooked. One of the submissions put forward that criminal activity had been carried out by staff employed by Murdoch-family controlled media entities, for the purposes of creating exclusive news stories.

Alleged abuse of power

- Two submissions stated that members of the Murdoch family and Senior Executives at Murdoch-family owned companies had abused positions of power. The submissions stated that these individuals had applied pressure on politicians to ensure that policies implemented were in the commercial interests of the Murdoch family-owned businesses. Each submission related to a different jurisdiction.
- One of the submissions stated that the Murdoch Family Trust had “aggressively” used mergers to become a dominant media entity and had forced alternative programming to exit media markets.

Political influence

- In two submissions examples were given of the Murdoch family, through its control of media enterprises, seeking to influence and benefit politicians/ political parties they have affiliations with. In addition, it was stated that Murdoch family-owned media publications reported negatively on, politicians who refused to use their decision-making powers for the benefit the Murdoch family's commercial interests.

Inaccurate news reporting

- One submission gave examples of false news stories that had been reported and/or published by Murdoch-family controlled newspapers. These submissions stated that once it came to light that the information reported was inaccurate, no apology or attempt at rectifying the information had been made.