

Mulcair's PLAN

Protecting our public broadcaster

Media backgrounder

JANUARY 22, 2015



Protecting our public broadcaster

The challenge

After 9 years under Stephen Harper, and 13 under the Liberals, our public broadcaster's position is precarious. Today, CBC/Radio-Canada is struggling to maintain its integrity, its independence and the quality programming we have come to treasure.

- // In 1997-98, the Chrétien Government made record cuts to CBC/Radio-Canada—reducing its operating budget allocations by \$357 million, from \$1.069 billion to \$712 million ¹.
- // In the 2012 federal budget, the Conservatives announced their intention to cut \$115 million from the Corporation's annual budget allocations between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 ².

Canadians and our public broadcaster are paying the price for Conservative and Liberal negligence.

- // Following the release of the 2012 budget, the CBC presented a five-point plan to eliminate 650 full-time positions by the end of 2014-2015 ³.
- // A second round of cuts was announced on April 10, 2014: a further reduction of \$130 million by 2016, with 657 additional jobs lost, including 570 by the end of 2015 ⁴.
- // In presenting its five year-plan, CBC/Radio-Canada senior management then announced that its workforce will shrink by 25% within those five years.

Our vision:

- // The NDP has committed to providing our public broadcaster with the resources it needs to look to the future and face the challenges presented by technological change and media convergence.
- // We believe that CBC/Radio-Canada should remain an independent, objective, transparent and innovative public broadcaster that represents Canadians.
- // The CBC should not have to operate in fear of new rounds of crushing budget cuts.

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Our commitment

Tom Mulcair's New Democrat team will strengthen our public broadcaster—by providing the tools it needs to carry out its mandate effectively:

- // cancel the \$115 million in cuts announced in the 2012 budget;
- // guarantee stable, predictable, multi-year financing to protect CBC/Radio-Canada from advertising market fluctuations and to help ensure its editorial independence from government; and
- // implement an independent process for appointing members of the CBC's Board of Directors.

The NDP understands that CBC/Radio-Canada is a public broadcaster and cannot fulfill its mandate if we treat it as we would a private broadcaster. We understand that leaving the Corporation vulnerable to advertising market fluctuations by cutting public funding—as the Liberals and Conservatives have—will suffocate the institution.

Tom Mulcair and his team have been clear: in today's fast-paced environment dominated by instant media from a variety of sources, it is more important than ever to have an effective public broadcaster with quality programming that offers Canadians a window onto their world—at home and abroad.

¹ Statistics provided in CBC/Radio-Canada annual report. The figures match those provided by Public Accounts of Canada (for the corresponding years).

² Finance Canada, *Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity: The 2012 Economic Action Plan*, p. 306.

³ CBC/Radio-Canada, *Notes pour une allocution d'Hubert T. Lacroix à la suite des mesures annoncées dans le cadre du Plan d'action pour la réduction du déficit*, April 4 2012.

⁴ CBC/Radio-Canada, "Budget Details" 2014-2015 Budget, p. 22.