

Subject: ABC Senate Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 8 September 2011

My submission to the Senate Inquiry into recent ABC program decisions, respectfully requests it's members to petition the ABC Board to return to, and honor the ABC Charter in relation to it's responsibilities to the Arts and Australian culture.

The Charter states it's obligations

"...to encourage and promote the musical,dramatic and other performing arts in Australia"

This primary obligation has been consistently eroded in ABC programing with the disbanding of specialist in-house production in favor of an increasing dependence on out-sourced programing. The position has been especially apparent in T.V programing but now it is suggested that the ABC flagship, Radio National is to be no longer exempt from cuts to its arts funding. ABC radio has historically been magnificent with the intelligence,range,quality and diversity of its programing.

I am not consoled by the Managing Director's claim that standards will be maintained,under the new program schedules. He talks of freedom to innovate and challenge but surely this is the nub of ABC programing itself.His flagged reduction in the hours of arts presentation and the amalgamation of various programs can only mean a loss of diversity and quality,leading to a diminution of quality in programing and so, enjoyment and learning amongst a great number of Australians across the country.

I want the ABC to be funded to the extent that strong specialist units can be re-established to present high quality, local material particularly in the arts but across all genres in both T.V and radio.

I want the confidence to be able to believe that the public broadcaster will be able to return to programing that will be focused on diversity and quality rather than ratings.Under the current outsourcing of program production,the ABC stands to lose it's independence and integrity in that it's programs will be made by the same companies that write for commercial television,and with the commercial intent of on-selling these programs.

I want the confidence to know that renewed vigor in programming will allow the ABC to maintain itself as the primary promoter of our cultural identity.

Yours sincerely,
Ellie Bastow