



6 September 2011

Mr. S. Palethorpe
Environment & Communications References Committee Secretary
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions

On behalf of the South Australian Football Commission, I wish to make the following submission to the Environment and Communications Reference Committee in relation to the inquiry into ABC programming decisions.

In recent weeks, there has been strong speculation that the ABC is questioning the value of broadcasting State League Football in SA, WA, Victoria and Tasmania, together with the rugby codes in Queensland and NSW.

For the SANFL competition, as the leading football league outside of the AFL, this speculation is significant cause for concern.

The ABC telecast is a key component of the SANFL's commitment to growing and promoting the nation's strongest state-based football competition.

The SANFL competition continues to go from strength to strength, with attendances up on 2010 figures by 2 per cent after a season in which minor round crowds exceeded 276,000 and the Grand Final at AAMI Stadium attracted 35,000 spectators. Research shows that the vast majority of South Australians have an attachment to an SANFL Club.

The opportunity for South Australians to watch the progress of their SANFL club on the ABC is fundamental to a substantial portion of the community.

Particularly given SA's significant aged population compared to other states, it underscores the importance of lifestyle for a significant part of our population in being able to continue their interest in football from their home.

Additionally, it provides a valuable social service in encouraging young people to be active in team sport. In that context, South Australia leads the nation with its football participation rate per capita.

The SA Football Commission understands the State League broadcasts across the nation make up a significant percentage of the ABC's internally-produced programming, which is a critical measure for the national broadcaster.

We believe the removal of State League telecasts from the ABC's schedule would contravene tenet (2)(a)(i) of the ABC's Charter which requires the ABC to take into account the broadcasting services provided by the commercial and community sectors of the Australian broadcasting system when it determines its own program schedule.

It is highly unlikely the SANFL competition would be able to secure a commercial or community broadcast partner equal to its current arrangement with the ABC should programming be axed.

Furthermore, under the Charter, the ABC is compelled to broadcast programs contributing to a sense of national identity and to encourage awareness of Australia and the Australian community.

The SANFL competition is a cornerstone of the South Australian community. The public groundswell supporting the continuation of SANFL telecasts in recent weeks, outlined in the attached document, is testament to the competition's social relevance.

The Commission has had initial discussions with the ABC and has actively requested an opportunity for further communication before a decision on the SANFL telecast's future is made.

The Commission has invested more than \$200,000 in the last three years and is totally committed to this investment into the future.

Yours sincerely,

Darren Chandler
General Manager – Football & Corporate Operations



Sunday Mail Adelaide
04-Sep-2011

Page: 12

Regional Changes - Metro

Market: Adelaide

Circulation: 284401

Type: Capital City Daily

Size: 47.80 sq.cms

-----S

Bid for SANFL's TV life

FEDERAL MP Kate Ellis has launched a petition to raise pressure on the ABC amid fears it could axe its SANFL coverage.

The Employment Participation Minister, who was previously sport minister, is aiming to get every South Australian MP on board the campaign and collect signatures at local football ovals.

"Members from both sides of the House . . . are all hearing from our local communities about how important this is," Ms Ellis, the member for Adelaide, said.

"We want generations to come and be able to enjoy SANFL football no matter where they are."

Ms Ellis, who has also written to ABC managing director Mark Scott, aims to collect thousands of signatures to convince the ABC to continue its SANFL coverage.

SANFL general manager of football Darren Chandler said the ABC's coverage of matches was vital to continue engaging budding regional footballers and country supporters who could not get to games.



Times Victor Harbor
01-Sep-2011

Page: 12
General News
Market: Victor Harbor SA
Circulation: 7545
Type: Regional
Size: 62.51 sq.cms

---T---

Briggs lobbies for SANFL football on television

REGION - Concern that regional SANFL followers could lose their already limited access to television coverage has prompted Mayo MP Jamie Briggs to write to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).

The public broadcaster currently televises its SANFL 'match of the round' on ABC1 on Sunday afternoons, but has not indicated whether the coverage will continue

beyond this season.

Mr Briggs wrote to ABC Managing Director Mark Scott this week, urging him to, "make a commitment to broadcasting SANFL games into the future."

He said the SANFL had enjoyed a 25-year partnership with the ABC, which was crucial to the promotion of the game, and loss of television coverage could damage junior development and participation

levels.

"For many, such as the elderly and those in regional areas, the ABC broadcast has been their only link to staying in touch with the competition," Mr Briggs wrote.

"The role of the ABC in maintaining the strength of this great competition has been invaluable and it is my view that it should continue into the future."



Guardian Messenger
24-Aug-2011

Page: 5
General News
Market: Adelaide
Circulation: 71025
Type: Suburban
Size: 28.18 sq.cms

--W----

Georganas backs SANFL campaign

The campaign to save ABC Television's coverage of the SANFL has reached Federal Parliament. Hindmarsh MP **Steve Georganas** (ALP) made a speech in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, August 16, highlighting the importance of the SANFL broadcast to the community. Mr Georganas said axing the broadcast would be devastating, and that he had written to the ABC's Managing Director **Mark Scott** asking for an assurance it would not be cut.



Footy needs TV

SANFL | KANE MCKAY

PASSIONATE Glenelg and West Adelaide supporters have warned of the potentially disastrous consequences for the SANFL if ABC television coverage of the competition is axed.

Members of the Snouts Louts, a 400-strong group of fanatical Bays fans, said the ABC's television coverage was vital in maintaining a strong state league.

"It would be quite detrimental to the competition," said Snouts Louts member **Joel Bayliss**.

"There are people out there who can't get to the games, so the television coverage is all they have. I went away to Kenya for a few weeks, and I was still able to keep up with the SANFL by watching it on ABC iView."

News emerged earlier this month that ABC TV's SANFL coverage might be axed following a national review of its program-

ming.

Snouts Louts member **Gordon Anderson** said news of the possible axing was "terribly disappointing. It would be a huge blow for people who can't go to the games," he said.

"Hopefully the ABC realises that there's a large group of people out there that rely on the coverage."

Since the inception of the Adelaide Crows in 1991, the ABC has been the sole broadcaster of the SANFL. Snouts Lout **Peter Eglinton** said the mooted cuts could undermine what is arguably the strongest competition outside the AFL.

"You have to promote the competition," he said. "If nobody knows it's on, no-one will go."

"It could end up like (Sheffield) Shield cricket where nobody goes."

"And what about those people in

nursing homes and in the country that can't go to games?"

West Adelaide life member and current league team manager **Lee Harradine** said the ABC's coverage of the SANFL was excellent and it would be a major loss if axed.

"They put on a really good production with good people," he said.

"I think it's one major connection that the ABC has with the public."

"So it would be a major loss for South Australian sport and the ABC."

ABC SANFL producer **Paul Chadwick** has said he would learn at the end of the season if cuts to locally produced programming would affect the SANFL coverage.



ABC may flick the switch on SANFL

KEN McGREGOR
ADAM HEGARTY

THE SANFL may not be televised for the first time in 48 years next year as speculation mounts that coverage of the competition may be the latest victim of ABC programming cuts.

The ABC has been the sole televisor of the competition since the Adelaide Crows entered the AFL in 1991.

If the decision is made to pull the plug it will severely damage the SANFL's marketing potential.

SANFL general manager of football and corporate operations Darren Chandler said the ABC's reluctance to commit was concerning but he was optimistic the broadcaster would do the "right thing and decide to support community football".

"We have not been told what they are going to do yet, we understand they are reviewing all their programs," he said.

"Having said that we have not had any com-

mitment that they are not going to cut their coverage".

The ABC has refused to deny whether cuts to local sporting coverage will follow, but yesterday moved to dispel talk about the programming cuts.

ABC spokeswoman Lesna Thomas said she "didn't have the foggiest" of ideas why speculation had grown that coverage was in jeopardy.

"There has been no

final decision on 2012 coverage on lots of things," Ms Thomas said.

AdelaideNow readers reacted angrily to the speculation yesterday.

"If we lose this we lose another part of who we are," Tony, of Golden Grove, wrote.

"We don't get to see SA players, hear SA names or even SA accents and voices."

19 August, 2011 12:17PM ACST

SANFL ABC TV final decision later this year

By Brett Williamson

With local SANFL fans concerns over rumours that ABC TV will not renew its weekly broadcasts of SANFL match, ABC director of corporate affairs Michael Millett told 891 Mornings a decision was yet to be made.

Mr Millett said ABC managing director Mark Scott was developing a three to five year strategy for television production with a mix of internal and external production.

"We've simply put the discussions on the new SANFL contract on hold while that strategy work goes ahead," Mr Millett said.

With the SANFL expressing concerns that a new contract was normally signed early in the season, Mr Millett said a final decision would not be reached until after the strategic plans were finalised.

"Mark's indicated that he wants to wrap that up before the end of the year."

Mr Millett said he would like to think the decision would come by 'about September/October'.

With an 891 ABC Adelaide facebook poll currently showing 634 votes in favour and 99 votes against the keeping of the broadcast, Mr Millett said the ABC television offices were receiving passionate feedback about continuing to broadcast the local football leagues in Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia.

With independent Senator Nick Xenophon requesting a parliamentary enquiry into the financing of the ABC's coverage of events and productions, Mr Millett said the ABC was used to accountability from Parliament and would pay attention to any outcomes.

"We've got to decide on our sporting mix as part of the overall production mix."