

Submission to the Senate Enquiry into Recent ABC program decisions

I expect the ABC to be a producer of innovative quality programming in all areas. I call for:

- * the ABC to be less dependent on outsourced programming.

Recognising the stated priority to attract new audiences, the experience of recent years suggests that many outsourced TV programs on the ABC are of a mediocre quality designed to attract ratings rather than being innovative or cutting edge. This appears to be a strategy for short term strategy rather than long term audience building.

- * the ABC to be funded and rebuilt so that it has strong specialist units to produce high levels of high quality and genuinely local in-house programming in all program genres on radio, TV and online.

The ABC is in a unique position to do this. Creating a vibrant culture of in-house productions would draw together a cross-section of our most creative thinkers and producers in all media. Programs generated in such a culture would be dynamic and influential across the Australian community. Some of these programs would also be revenue raising in terms of their export potential.

- * a public broadcaster that is focused on diversity and quality, not ratings

We need the ABC to create well informed public debate. With the critical issues we are facing in the global context, the ABC's role is pivotal as a generative influence rather than being another reactive mouthpiece.

9 September 2011

Dr Margaret White