



The Tasmanian Theatre Company is greatly concerned at the recent announcement by the ABC of the axing of the Art Nation, one of very few programs offered by the ABC which report on current national arts news and events.

The ABC produces so few news programs about key contemporary arts issues and events that is perilously close already to not fulfilling its charter.

The Australia Council for the Arts released a study in 2010 called, *More Than Bums On Seats: Australian participation in the arts*, the research showed that attitudes towards the arts in the Australian public are increasingly positive. Why then at this time is the ABC diminishing its arts content at a time when interest in the arts in Australia has never been higher?

The research behind this report speaks for itself: 9 in 10 Australians participate in the arts, 9 in 10 think arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian. The report makes it clear that most Australians perceive the individual, social and community benefits of the arts, and agree they make life more meaningful. The research also shows that the arts are becoming more inclusive.

The national arts curriculum is undergoing a major overhaul before being rolled out – a strengthening of the teaching of the arts in schools around the country – is it not absurd that at the same time the national broadcaster would abrogate its responsibilities to arts news and broadcasting?

The Charter of the ABC, states that:

(1) The functions of the Corporation are:

(a) to provide within Australia innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard ...

(i) broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community;

and

- (ii) broadcasting programs of an educational nature;
- (b) to transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and **cultural enrichment** that will:
- (c) to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia.

And continues under (

2) (a) (iii) “the responsibility of the Corporation as the provider of an independent national broadcasting service to provide a balance between broadcasting programs of wide appeal and specialised broadcasting programs”...

Tasmanian artists could make a reasonable argument that this charter is barely being fulfilled now. Local arts stories are very rarely broadcast on any ABC medium in this state and there is no indication that a reduction in national broadcasting of arts news will lead to any kind of increase in local coverage.

I urge the committee to insist that the ABC fulfill its charter with regard to coverage of arts news and that the ABC’s commitment to arts coverage EVERYWHERE in Australia accurately reflects the Australian public’s interest in the arts.

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Artistic Director/CEO

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