

Dear Senate Committee,

Television production has gradually become increasingly centralised; perhaps the greatest evidence for this is in the WIN/ABC facility *MediaHub*. But with this centralisation comes an increasing dilution of the local; local programming, with local issues.

Commercial networks have already abandoned Perth as a location for the creation of content; the once mighty TVW-7 – the city's first television station – is now little more than a news-room used for the 6pm bulletin, and the studios within the complex, mothballed.

It should be noted that there is no legal provision for local programming beyond the national level. Indeed, even New Zealand counts as 'local' programming. As it becomes increasingly easy to do so, networks are centralising their output and local programming is restricted to the national level.

But it should not be forgotten that Australia is a federation of six states, and two territories. Each with their own local identity, events and issues, which are no-longer being reflected in the television they watch.

The ABC provides facilities for the still-remaining local productions – such as the Channel 7 Telethon, Channel 7 RAC Christmas Pageant, and Australia Day Skyworks as well as sporting events such as AFL games, soccer and the Hopman Cup. The ABCs internal local production, that is, produced by the ABC for the ABC are increasingly disappearing. The Hopman Cup was dropped by the ABC in 2010; this was later picked up by the TEN Network channel, ONE, for five years.

If you visit the ABC's WA production page – which hasn't been updated since 2005 – what you are faced with is a list of local productions which not only are no longer being made, but have not been replaced by anything else. *How the Quest was Won* was replaced by *Can We Help?* which along with *Rollercoaster* has been cancelled by the ABC. *Gardening Australia's* WA team has been reduced from two to one. And now the last two extant local productions by the ABC, the WAFL Premiership and ANZAC Day march are now in doubt. A sporting code and an annual event are hardly a commitment to the local. Of note is that should these programmes be cancelled, the commercial TVW-7 would have a greater commitment to WA programming than the ABC. Local programming needn't be exclusively shown in one state or another – with both ABC1 and ABC2 available, as well as the online iview platform available.

With the increasing removal of Perth, and WA as a place of production the ABC, and indeed television in general feels like it is runs without any local issues in mind – that we are an afterthought. No longer do television broadcasts even bother with 'LIVE AEST', they just say 'LIVE', the fact that programming, and often news, is delayed content from the east is merely assumed. As TV continues to centralise in Sydney and Melbourne we risk losing the ability to reflect Australia as a whole, to reflect the local, and not merely our two largest cities.

As I have said, there is no legal reason to compel the ABC, or any TV network to continue with local programming beyond the national level, but I believe it is time we either decided to enforce some truly local content production, or to fund our small community broadcasters to enable them to produce such content.

Regards,

James Jago