

Submission to Senate: Recent ABC programming decisions.

As an ABC employee I am most distressed at the reduction and apparent dismantling of ABC production. It appears that the model is to eliminate program production in all states except Melbourne and Sydney, leaving the other states with TV News & Current Affairs and Radio production only.

The model would also appear to be the elimination of internal production altogether. It seems to be purely ideologically driven with no comprehension or depth of understanding of what has made the ABC what it has been over the years.

There has been a great deal of technological change at the ABC for several years now, and much of it has been of tremendous benefit. The digital environment has greatly changed and enhanced the way in which things can be done. It has come at the cost of jobs, and that is a natural extension with these new tools at our disposal.

The thing is however, there is this sheer and absolute agenda by ABC management to reduce staff to unsustainable levels. This seems to be the driving force for any decisions made. It has greatly reduced the capacity of the ABC to meet high standards, where a critical mass of skills, knowledge and experience is being systematically eroded.

I have worked in Libraries & Archives for a number of years. Essentially, we have only ever been able to keep our heads above water on a day to day operational basis. Some major projects have been achieved, but many get started and then just go by the wayside. On the TV side of things, there are vast amounts of content on film and tape that are difficult or indeed not possible to access because it has only been possible to create rudimentary records (many still on old cards). This is ABC content from News, Current Affairs and program production that we are tasked with preserving, tracking and accessing for a wide range of clients. There remains a demanding daily workload for Archives staff despite the advantages of new technologies, but sometimes we see a bit of clear air and get a bit less demoralised and think, gosh – we might be able to find time to get some of that film out of those rusting metal cans so they don't completely disintegrate. Or, I might be able to get back to that project that I started so enthusiastically two years ago.

Well, not if those running the ABC have their way. Production goes, then resources that support production go and ABC content stays lost. That's the way it works, it's just a number crunch and everyone loses.

ABC staffer