

ABC Programming Decisions

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you to voice my concerns on the recent announcement of changes to ABC programming. As we know the ABC has fulfilled an important part of Australia's communication network for many years and I like many others would hope to see this continue.

The recently announced cutbacks have a far greater impact than just cost saving for the organisation. Although as every organisation these days has a greater focus on economic performance the economics of the organisation need to be balanced with the community benefit to the whole of Australia.

I fear that if continued cutbacks occur then we risk, in the long term, having the ABC as nothing more than a news service. The national broadcaster does its job well and contributed as a creator and incubator of new ideas and new talent. The ABC dares to make programs that other networks don't because of "economic reasons" only to later see the success and copy the programs.

There have been many award winning actors and journalists as a result of the efforts of the ABC. The quality of programming and the risk taking that results in great products are a testament to the good work that is done.

The ABC provides programming that many people would otherwise not have the opportunity to see. This is particularly the case with some sports coverage. Take for example lawn bowls, although I am not a bowler, I have on many occasions watched the skills and excitement that a close contest can bring. The ABC provides access to programs that would otherwise be unavailable.

Financial aspects are of course a consideration in decision making and although aspects of production can be outsourced to other entities what I am fearful of is that, over the long term, the values of the ABC will be diminished as it becomes an administrative organisation rather than a "completely integrated" media and communications entity meeting the needs of the Australian community.

On another note, has there been any research done on the "Voice of the Customer"? That is, those who are watching the ABC and have a great interest in the programs.

If there is a focus on cost reduction in the ABC then I suggest that effort be spent into looking for areas of non-value adding activity. What are the bureaucratic functions that use up resources and do not provide benefit to the customers? Look for areas of duplication and processes that are unnecessary in order to free up funding to the areas that can make the best use of it to benefit the community they serve.

The economic measure is not the only measure that should be used to evaluate an organisation's performance.

Thank you and I wish you well in your inquiries.

Kind regards
John Yealland