

Submission to the Enquiry into the

Recent ABC Programming Decisions,

As a long term employee of the ABC I have worked as a cameraman for many styles of TV program. These have included, science, religion, music, sport, art, education, lifestyle, news and current affairs.

Over the last 25 years I have seen many changes within the ABC. One thing that has always stood out to me, is that when employees speak about when they began working for the ABC, they refer to it as “joining “ the ABC. There is a culture within the ABC, of belief in the function and value of the ABC to Australia. It is often heard said that you don’t work here because the money is good but because it is worthwhile.

Such a culture of care and belief in the ABC charter is valuable and I would suggest vital in the production of programs for the Australian public. The people who work for the ABC have spent their careers in developing skills to tell the stories that reflect our country and its people and would prefer to continue to do this within the organisation.

I have seen Public Service inefficiencies disappear years ago in the ABC and the dedicated fresh keen minds that produce innovating programming today are reflected on the screens of Australia’s TV sets. ABC people want to make ABC programs and do not want to see the ABC become a re-distribution house for other people’s ideas. Every staff member who contributes to a program has influence over the final product to a degree. Indeed the interpretation of what is “ABC” at the moment is shared among many. With a “buying in” policy, the content choice, I would suggest, be left to a few with their narrower viewpoints and experience. If we want the ABC to have the responsibility of cultural representative of the Australian people then the ABC should make its own programs.

As government requires representation federally, in every state and council, so the ABC should culturally also represent nationally and down to the local level. A general policy of retraction to a “national, eastern state” perspective is far from ideal. Some programs need to be made for locals and by locals to represent all. We are going to lose this completely if current trends within the organisation continue.

The concern is also that the ABC’s responsibility to specialized groups such as serious science , arts, education, and other areas of factual human interest are under threat as too much importance is placed on “entertainment value” to gain ratings.

I would suggest that the cultural value and a balanced interpretation of the ABC charter lies with the people within the ABC and the ABC should remain in control by continuing to make its own programs and fairly represent the whole of the Australian people.

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