



**Chairman  
Select Senate Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Dear Sir,

**re: Inquiry into *The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's* commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity.**

*The South Hobart Progress Association Inc.* (SHPA Inc.) is a broadly-based community organisation which aims to look after the well-being of citizens of South Hobart. The Association's aims are as follows:-

- (a) *To protect and promote the welfare, interests and general well-being of the community of South Hobart.*
- (b) *To enhance, promote, protect and preserve the social, cultural and built heritage of Tasmania with special attention to South Hobart.*
- (c) *To promote, organise and conduct events, entertainment, functions or any other similar activity in South Hobart.*
- (d) *To make representations to local, State and Commonwealth authorities, bodies, boards, councils or other entities and any non Government entities for the promotion of the objects of the Association.*
- (e) *To operate and manage a community centre for the benefit of the community of South Hobart and for other citizens and groups as may be determined from time to time.*

The Association currently has well over two hundred financial members, most of whom are life members. The SHPA Inc. produces a monthly newsletter which is distributed to 2,700 households in the 7004 postcode area.

South Hobartians, and Tasmanians in general, feel a sense of disconnection and disappointment with the behaviour of our national broadcaster – *The Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (ABC), which, has, over a number of years, sought to “disenfranchise” residents of this State either by a deliberate policy of centralising its activities in Sydney, and, to a lesser extent, Melbourne or by cost-cutting measures or a combination of the two. These cost-cutting measures have had the effect of curtailing local programming, threatening employment and career choice paths (in a State already hard-hit by unemployment and the lack of career choices for our young), and limiting the opportunity for the “exposure” of local cultural identity.

For example, if the present further cuts to local funding occur, local sporting events will no longer have an outlet for wider audiences. TFL football is one of the sports to be so affected. Other outside broadcasting events, such as the Anzac Day march and other specifically Tasmanian events, stand a good chance of losing exposure.

Further, the closure of TV programming facilities in Tasmania will make it virtually impossible to produce programmes of local interest or national series such as *Collectors*. Already, *Gardening Australia's* production has been transferred to Victoria.

Centralisation of any organisation, but particularly government-owned or run ones, can have the affect of narrowing the focus and becoming unrepresentative and irrelevant, in the ABC's case to the cultural experiences of the Nation. The ABC Charter requires it to be a reflection of the society in which it operates. Thus, the "Sydney-centric" concentration is a cause for concern for all Australians, especially those in regional areas.

The ABC is an organisation of which all Australians should be immensely proud. It is the jewel in our cultural and sporting life having provided sterling service, especially in the breadth and scope of its interests. Rural Australia still relies on the ABC to provide current and relevant local news services. It has an illustrious past in holding up a mirror of what it is to be Australian. Unfortunately, current-day economic thinking, based on "economic rationalist" beliefs and policies, if allowed to take hold of this organisation, will lead to an impoverished and unrepresentative view of modern day Australia.

No other organisation in Australia has the ability to unbiasedly report on current events or foster a love of all things Australian. If the ABC continues along the present path, it is likely that we will see an organisation for which principles and integrity are discarded and which will, in all likelihood, descend into mediocrity, "popularism" and insularism; an organisation unable to represent the aspirations and values of the Nation.

The Association takes this opportunity to thank the Committee for the opportunity to express its concerns.

Yours faithfully,

**David Halse Rogers.**  
Hon. Secretary. SHPA Inc.

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