



The Australian Ballet

Friday 9th September, 2011

The Australian Ballet is concerned by the recent announcement that the ABC will discontinue its television arts program, Art Nation, as well as the Artworks program on Radio National at the end of 2011.

As Australia's flagship dance company, programs like these are vital to what we do, and allow us to converse with the public. Without them, the dialogue becomes one-sided.

There is much evidence to show that the arts scene in Australia is thriving. Recent studies by both The Australia Council of the Arts and Live Performance Australia have demonstrated that the arts and attending live performances are as popular with audiences as ever.

On August 11, the Minister for the Arts, The Hon Simon Crean MP, released a discussion paper on the creation of a National Cultural Policy, which the Government believes *"will show how the arts and culture can contribute to achieving Australia's goals by helping to build an inclusive society, delivering an arts education to young Australians, creating career pathways, providing avenues for expression for our citizens, driving innovation and contributing to productivity."*

On August 26, Crean, alongside The Hon Peter Garrett MP, announced that the arts will play a central role in the national school curriculum, with drama, dance, visual arts, music and media arts to be studied in all schools.

These recent announcements are both extremely positive steps in encouraging a flourishing arts culture within Australia. We question if the move by the ABC accurately reflects these community sentiments and if they are indeed fulfilling their Charter *"to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia"* to the best of their abilities.

ABC Managing Director Mark Scott has reassured the arts community and its faithful audience in an opinion piece in The Age on September 7 that *"In making its decision, ABC TV asked an important question: couldn't the ABC, given its place at the centre of Australian cultural life, do better for the arts? We believe it can and it will. And we can do it by increasing the ways arts stories are told, and telling them in greater depth than the magazine format permits."*

We trust that the ABC will continue to support the arts across all future programming, as Mr Scott assures us.

Regards,

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