

Sunday, 4 September 2011

THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE on ENVIRONMENT and COMMUNICATIONS.

Dear Sirs / Mesdames,

I write about a subject that is of ***national cultural importance***: the telecasts of WAFL football matches on ABC Television on a Saturday afternoon.

It is easy to bandy numbers about which highlight the quantity of viewers who enjoy and depend on these telecasts. In Western Australia, it numbers well over 100 000 patrons weekly during the seasons. In the other major AFL states this number is possibly a lot more, as a function of population.

My argument goes beyond sheer numbers. It is obvious to any observer of Australian culture that football is more than just a GAME PLAYED EACH WINTER .In Australia, Football is as close as one can get to cultural cement: a bonding and binding agent that binds a community together, creating such an important focus and common link as no words - or budgetary constraints - can express.

In the case of our Country people, whose lives in this country are already very difficult in some respects, a weekly telecast of our WAFL games represents relief, enjoyment and education. Education as a result of younger people seeing the top State players in action, when regional coaches use this invaluable resource as a teaching tool !

Turning away for a moment from that argument, let's consider the needs of an older generation of Australians. They too derive incredible pleasure and comfort from football telecasts of State-based football, such as the WAFL, VFL, SANFL and others.

The needs and pleasures of people can't always be the subject of mere budget. This country CAN and must afford the continuation of the ABC's ability to telecast local football matches on a Saturday afternoon around Australia.

The expectations, probably of millions of people , should be your only guideline in deciding to RETAIN this service for a community that is already in a degree of pain.

Yours truly,
Don Henley