

I have been very disappointed in the ABC's recent decision to cut arts and cultural shows from their scheduling for next year. I believe that Australia has a unique and distinct culture and this can be supported through the mass media (amongst other means). Due to the paucity of Australian content rules governing Australian free to air programming we give far greater air time to shows produced in other countries, primarily the US. This is not a particularly intelligent decision for such a young country to make – a multi cultural country that has such a vibrant mix of cultures and ethnicities. This is not what is represented on the majority of our free to air television. An outsider to our country spending 24 hrs viewing our television stations would quite possibly form the impression that we are merely another state of the US – because that is what is primarily portrayed within our media.

By axing arts and cultural shows in the way that the ABC has done makes you wonder if there is any point in continuing to have a national broadcaster – one that is supposed to contribute to our cultural identity, to provide an educational service and a reflection of ourselves. How can the ABC be supposed to be fulfilling its charter if the only things that it seems to produce itself are news and current affairs shows?

Art, and culture more broadly, provide an avenue of cultural expression that can be a fantastic yardstick as to the health of a nation's identity. Without quality representation of Australian art and culture how is it possible to experience what Australian art and culture have to provide?

Like many people within my generation I find myself turning further and further away from television culture because of the lack of identification with the fare that is predominantly offered. The ABC was one of the few television channels that I watched on a regular basis. The loss of yet another identifiably Australian avenue for cultural expression makes my future viewing more and more unlikely.