

Hi Senators

This is my submission to the above matter.

In 1966 I lived at Papunya in the Northern Territory. Papunya is about 250 kilometers slightly north west of Alice Springs. Today it is still one of the most remote communities in Australia. In 1966 it was even more so. Our contact with the outside world was limited. But on most days we would turn on the ABC radio shortwave service and listen to the lunch time news. Its a strong memory; standing around in the kitchen of our house with my mother and uncle and aunt, listening to the news. We also used to listen to the BBC World Service on short wave too.

Fast forward to July 2016 -- I was at Papunya again -- ABC radio reception was lousy, as it often is out bush -- the reality is communications in general out bush aren't good. No matter what people say -- basic things like adequate radio reception are more difficult to achieve in a remote setting. My solution to the poor general reception was to take out my transistor radio and tune to short wave. It was as clear as a bell.

It is difficult to describe to most Senators how it feels to have a service like ABC shortwave removed because of decisions made in Sydney. In Papunya, the decision to remove shortwave services will be met with resignation. Another service removed by a decision made elsewhere without consideration for remote living Australians.

My understanding of the ABC's Charter is that it should provide communication services to all Australians. Inherently, providing that service will be more difficult in some, particularly remote, areas. But that's the ABC's job. Do your job people.

There is no guarantee that I have seen, that services will be as good or better following the removal of the shortwave service. The decision to remove the shortwave service is wrong and should be reversed immediately.

I am a lifelong supporter of the ABC -- in these times of 'fake' news and all the rest, the ABC is needed now, more than ever. However this decision to close the shortwave service will undermine the ABC's credibility in remote Australia.

I ask Senators to ensure the ABC reverses this perverse decision. Now is not the time for ABC management to reinforce growing regional views that Australia is run by people with a 'Sydney and the bush.' mentality.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Kind regards

James (Jamie) W Gallacher  
Director  
Strategic Operations Group