

ABC Programming

To the Members of the Senate Committee

I depend on the ABC, in TV, internet and radio, for clear and dependable news and analysis as well as quality entertainment and current affairs programmes that are worth listening to and watching. As it is the national broadcaster, I expect that Australian content, production and presentation would be the norm in its programmes and therefore I think that resources should be devoted to growth in that area. Exceptional programmes from outside Australia are very acceptable but the emphasis should be on building quality Australian content and supporting Australian personnel.

Materialism is a hallmark of our times and is reflected in the overbearing emphasis on the buying of goods, whether they are needed or not. Commercial media are dependent on advertising in this context and can only present their programmes to the extent that their advertising is successful. It is not necessary for the national broadcaster to present the types of material that attract marketers in their pursuit of ratings and therefore possible sales. The ABC is a funded body, not dependent on ratings and therefore ought to present alternatives to the are offered on commercial media in its programming. These alternatives should include even-handed presentation of fact and opinion and on other programmes where quality of talent, product and thought are foremost. Innovation should be supported but always emphasising worth over novelty for its own sake.

Great care must be taken in co-production of programmes to ensure that the ABC's charter is not overridden by the vision of the partner.

Government must fund the ABC to be a leader in quality programmes with Australian content. The Australian taxpayers can afford to take the risks that those governed by the market cannot (or will not).

I expect the ABC to remain independent of both the Government and the market and therefore capable of critiquing both. To do this well, taxpayers' money must be spent generously.

Keep it Australian. Keep it independent. Forget the ratings. Give us meat.

Sister Susan Connelly