

COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION

BATHURST BRANCH
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BATHURST CPSA is a non-sectarian non-party political organisation caring for the welfare of its pensioner and self-funded retirees membership.

Mr. Paul Neville MP 31st October 2000
Chair of Committee
Inquiry into Radio Industry in Regional & Rural Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA 2060

Dear Sir,

Senate Inquiry into Radio Services in Regional & Rural Australia.

This submission is in addition to the previous submission from this organisation dated 24th October 2000, and follows the public announcement of cuts to funding for the ABC

This organisation wishes to voice its strong objection to any new cuts to funding for ABC programmes of any kind, because of the number of severe cuts which have already been made over a number of years.

In particular, the announced ABC Management cuts to programmes such as News and Current Affairs is seen as a threat to independence and freedom of speech and information in this country.

It puts Democracy itself under threat.

All political parties have complained that the ABC is biased against them at various times, but they cannot all be right. It is a democratic process to discuss, debate, and if necessary criticise, political ideas and policies.

Both the Labor Party and the Liberals have made savage cuts to funding of the ABC over many years, resulting in a diminished range of programmes.

As this organisation and many other socially responsible representative organisations have discovered, any criticism of the present Federal Government has caused the withdrawal of funding. ACOSS, The Blind Citizens of Australia and Relationships Australia are the latest to have their funds cut for this reason.

The proposed cut by ABC Management to ABC News and Current Affairs has now reached a dangerous level, where it is possible that only government approved news items will be released to the public, commercially. This is leading to the formation of rule by Dictatorship and must never be tolerated in this country.

With privatisation, and aggregation of all types of media under limited ownership it is more important than ever before to retain and strengthen the publicly owned ABC.

With new technology adding to costs, instead of cutting funds to the ABC, they should be increased to prepare for this new technological age.

We hereby register our strong disapproval to these cuts and demand the reversal of this decision.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Mauro
Vice President, Bathurst CPSA