



The Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
ACT 2600

April 12, 2013

**Submission regarding:**

**Proposed ABC Melbourne New Office and Studio Accommodation Project  
102-118 Sturt Street, Southbank, Melbourne.**

I write as Chief Executive Officer of Open Gardens Australia (OGA, formerly known as Australia's Open Garden Scheme), which is a not-for-profit national organisation that exists for the purposes of promoting the knowledge, benefits and enjoyment of gardens and gardening across Australia.

OGA was established in 1987 in Victoria, primarily as an initiative arising from ABC regional radio in this state. With the support of other partners and advocates, it has become established as Australia's premium garden visitation body, which also delivers many garden-themed events across the country each year. Surplus funds derived from entry fees and other revenue of OGA are returned to the community in the form of grants for garden projects in the urban and rural communities. In addition, many garden owners support local, national and international charities through the donation of their share of garden entry revenue and by inviting the involvement of local service organisations in their garden days.

OGA continues to enjoy a strong and productive relationship with ABC Local Radio across the country. Each week, the community is provided with advice about opportunities to visit gardens in their area, and also to hear directly from the garden owners about their own journeys in creating their gardens. We have also been fortunate from time-to-time to have the great benefit of outside broadcasts at major garden events, most recently at the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's 'Cruden Farm' in 2012.

Our Board and regional committees around Australia have representation from ABC personnel in recognition of the primary partnership arrangement between OGA and ABC Local Radio. In addition, ABC Southbank has regularly provided facilities for our regional committee and Board meetings. In summary, an organisation that exists for the purposes of community benefit has been very

generously assisted and supported by ABC Local Radio, particularly here in Victoria through the Southbank facility.

On behalf of OGA, I wish to express our strongest support for the development of the expanded facility at the ABC Centre at Southbank. Bringing together the various functional units to one central purpose-designed location is eminently sensible, particularly given the substandard nature of the existing television facility at Gordon Street, Elsternwick. The new development would in our view provide great potential for further interaction between the ABC and its diverse community, through various media channels. In addition, it would enhance the cultural profile of the local precinct, through conversion of a low standard carpark into a state-of-the-art media centre.

Put simply, Open Gardens Australia would not have been established or have thrived as it has, without the invaluable support of ABC Local Radio. We are therefore very enthusiastic supporters of the ABC's proposal to further develop and improve its Southbank headquarters, and believe that this will provide outstanding value to the Victorian and Australian community.

I would be happy to provide further statements of support as required.  
My contact details are as below:

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Yours sincerely,

**Richard Barley**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

**Open Gardens Australia**