

Secretary:.....

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND
THE ARTS

16/11/2000

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Communications, Transport & the Arts
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts	
Submission No:	221
Date Received:	27/11/00
Secretary:	Janet Holmes

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to add my voice to your inquiry into the adequacy of regional radio services.

The ABC does an outstanding job for country people such as myself. They offer me Radio National which I find a "lifeblood" of international and national news, politics and comment each morning followed by an interesting clutch of programs including for example the Religion report, the Science report, Life Matters, the Arts Show etc.

The local ABC mid north coast takes a more parochial approach filling the airwaves with local news, farming news, interviews from community groups etc. I would go mad with what I consider the trivia of their programming each day if I could not balance it with Radio Nationals serious coverage of world events and Federal politics.

I can't get News Radio on the Mid North Coast which I find upsetting, however as long as I have choice between Radio National and ABC mid north coast local radio, then I am a very well pleased country listener and I would be most distressed if funding was cut to the ABC which in any way forced them to curtail any of this programming.

I'm not resisting change, I'm just saying that living in the country means that radio news and current affairs, as well as the country report and all the other local news is the way I can stay in touch and feel up to date with what is happening in Australia.

The TV news at night hasn't the time for the interviews across a broad range of subjects that radio can bring to country listeners. Also you might like to know that I have country friends who never turn off the ABC radio day after day. It is their entertainment and companion when they are alone on the farm.

I wrote to my local member Mark Vaile about funding cuts to the news and current affairs programs on the ABC and he wrote back telling me that the government has no input into, nor influence upon the outcome of how the ABC allocates its budget.

This is nonsense. Senator Alston has made repeated threatening comments about the ABC during the two terms of the Howard Government. Funding has not kept pace with the ABC's needs, nor with its push into digital TV, despite the figures quoted to me by Mr Vaile.

The Coalition might say it strongly supports the principle that the Board of the ABC should reject political interference from the Government of the day, but when board appointments are made that are blatantly political, what are listeners meant to read into this disclaimer.

I hope that the Standing Committee will look sensibly into the needs of our national broadcaster, and then recommend that the Coalition give it sufficient funding so that cuts do not have to be made to either National or Regional ABC broadcasting.

I for one am sick of hearing that the ABC is biased, that it doesn't cater to a broad enough range of tastes.

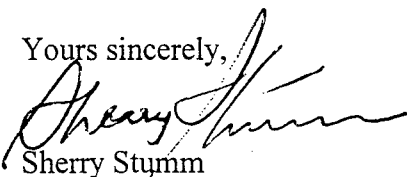
Look at the bias on commercial stations such as Radio 2UE and those awful opinionated broadcasters Alan Jones and John Laws, both of whom are still not complying with the need to tell listeners when they are endorsing (for money) products and making comment favourable to their paying clients.

If I was left with commercial TV and radio I would throw away my TV set and radio because they would present little of value because everything is geared toward their advertisers. Believe me I know I've work in commercial TV and radio and it's a most dishonest uncaring environment.

The ABC do not promote their radio personalities. They support them. They are not afraid to run programming that has either mass appeal (Macca on a Sunday) or is quite erudite (the Book Show or Phillip Adam's Late Night Life).

I hear a lot of integrity in ABC programming. I know they don't have to chase ratings and they don't have to sell their soul to the advertising dollar. And that is what makes the ABC precious to people like me and if it costs me as a tax payer then believe me I am glad to pay for the service.

Yours sincerely,



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