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Sent: Saturday, 21 July 2001 4:30 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: ABC Board submission

Submission on the appointment of ABC Board from Margaret Millar

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As a life long listener, watcher and fan of the ABC and an Australian taxpayer, I would like to make some comment on the appointment of the ABC Board. This is a matter vital to the actual independence of the Corporation. The present system is not working. Public confidence in the independence of the governing Board is being undermined. All governments in the past two decades have been suspicious of the ABC's investigative reporting and have tried to cripple the broadcaster by cutting its funding and appointing politically sympathetic Board members. This has now reached crisis level and cannot continue if the ABC is to survive.

The Board obviously cannot be appointed by the government of the day. A parliamentary committee of representatives from all parties is the fairest way. No party on this committee should have an over-riding majority. Every party should have a representative, one for the minor parties and perhaps three each for the major parties and one member for independents. The committee should comprise members of both houses and the representatives could be picked by their political parties. These representatives should probably be deemed suitable by their portfolios or shadow portfolios and interests i.e. portfolios and interests involving media, public broadcasting, communications, science, environment, education, the arts, social enquiry, cultural matters etc should be involved.

Likewise public interest groups such as education authorities and universities, publically funded arts groups, environmental groups, cultural groups including aboriginal representatives, religious organisations, scientific organisation such as CSIRO, could be asked to provide either suggestions for the Board appointees as they arise. Political appointments would in no way be possible and people who are members of political parties should not be eligible for appointment to the Board. Private business people nor private entrepreneurs likewise have no place on the Board of the ABC.

The ABC should be funded independently of the government budget. A certain % rise should be legally guaranteed for the proper working of the AbC no matter what political party is in government. This should be compulsory to a minimum amount and supervised by the parliamentary committee.

thankyou for your consideration of my submission.

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