

**From:** David Marks [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2001 3:35 PM  
**To:** ecita.sen@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** Senate Inquiry into Appointment of ABC Board Members

### **Submission to the Inquiry**

I write to express my concern at the path the ABC Board has been taking in recent years. While I am aware that all Governments appoint people sympathetic to them to the Board of the ABC I believe that the current Government has gone overboard in appointing members whose main interest is in implementing Government Policy rather than securing the future of the ABC. In particular I object to the current Chairman actively supporting the Prime Minister before the last election and again taking a particularly partisan view when he accused Mr Beazley of politicising the ABC for asking why the Program on Liberal involvement in the Keating Piggery was pulled from broadcast. One may well ask whether the real reason for delaying this program was to give the subjects time to formulate a response!

It would appear the current board has actively pursued the funding cuts imposed by the Government in contradiction to the statements that funding has increased. Furthermore, the appointment of Mr Shier has been an unmitigated disaster as the man is obviously an incompetent manager, regardless of his other media talents. Good managers introduce change in such a manner that they carry the employees with them. Good managers "take it on the chin" and accept responsibility for staff decisions rather than trying to blame others. Good managers behave rationally at all times and do not abuse employees. Finally, good managers listen to and take advice from their staff. One wonders how the board made such a terrible mistake in appointing Mr Shier and why they do not seem to have the courage to dismiss him unless they are following a political agenda to destroy the independence of the ABC.

The current Board has overseen serious decline in the ABC's ability to produce quality programs, maintain the only independent news and current affairs programs(although SBS does a sterling job), and wasted untold dollars in pointless and harmful restructures and redundancies.

Clearly, appointment of board members to the ABC Board must be de-politicised if the integrity and independence of the ABC is to be maintained and maintained it must be as a unifying force in this vast and diverse Nation. The solution would be to have all nominations vetted by a multiparty committee requiring a two thirds majority vote to confirm the appointment. Nominations must only be based on merit and have no overt links to any political party or competing commercial media interests.

For your attention

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