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Sent: Thursday, 2 August 2001 8:43 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: Submission to the Senate Enquiry on the ABC

The Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information, Technology and the Arts
References Committee.
S1.57 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Personal Submission
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ph. [REDACTED]

I am distressed and angered at the persistent cuts to funding and the appointment to the Board of Directors practices by both the major political parties over the past years, and the resultant winding down of ABC services and programming.

The reasons I feel this way include -

- The ABC is the only independent national broadcaster in our country.
- it is the only media body in Australia that is chartered to, and attempts to provide a balanced viewpoint of news and current affairs, as well maintain and develop our unique cultural identity.

As a parent of two teenage children in a country town I rely on the ABC to provide access to quality educational, documentary, drama and current affairs programs that provide a viable alternative to, and supplement the commercial networks.

Our children need to see a balanced perspective of their culture and the world at large. They need to see that ideas and values are as worthwhile in supporting as the consumption of material products. They deserve equitable access to to an independent media service that represents Australia as a cohesive, informed, and reflective nation.

The politicisation of the appointments to the Board of Directors over the years has resulted in eroding the charter of the ABC and censoring critical commentary within it to appease the politicians making the appointments. It is hypocritical for Australian politicians to pontificate about the strength of our democratic institutions and principles, when behind closed doors they make deliberate decisions of appointment that protect their reputations and self interests. This practice reeks of the corrupt and anti-democratic practices they would condemn in countries less fortunate than ours.

If politicians of any political persuasion cannot face up to the rigours of their policies, actions and convictions being scrutinised, analysed and evaluated publicly by an independent broadcaster then they should not seek office.

Therefore I submit that :

- (i) the Board of Directors should be appointed by a bipartisan committee.
- (ii) it should consist of people with knowledge, experience and expertise in the fields of its functions.

- (iii) the continuing placement and reappointment of the Directors should be made on their public record of implementing the charter of the ABC as a public service.

I have trusted the ABC for many years for the independence and quality of its programs and services. My trust is now waning. I would love to see my children have the opportunity to see it restored to its former greatness. I hope your committee can find the conviction to see that this happens.