

From: Elspeth McCracken-Hewson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 5 August 2001 7:03 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: Senate Inquiry on ABC Board Appointments

The Secretary

Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts References
Committee,
S157, Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,

We believe that the ABC is essential to Australia's culture and democracy. It is therefore vital that it be maintained as a well-resourced and comprehensive national public broadcaster which is independent from commercial and political influence.

The present system of appointments to the ABC Board is clearly unsatisfactory. It allows any government to stack the Board with people aligned with its philosophies and who act in its interests.

The present Board of the ABC has overseen the loss of talented staff, a decline in quality local production, an increased number of "repeats", the news and current affairs budget cut, and a loss of important programs such as Quantum, Media Watch. The ABC's focus has been diverted from producing quality programs, to raising funds from outside commercial sources, in ways which risk the ABC's independence.

We urge the Senate Inquiry to recommend that the Parliament introduce a system which ensures members of the ABC Board are appointed on the basis of merit and demonstrated commitment to independent and comprehensive national public broadcasting.

Yours faithfully,

Jeff and Elspeth McCracken-Hewson

45 Mangarra Road,
Canterbury, Vic 3126