

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

Submission concerning the appointment of members of the Board of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

I have been a regular listener to ABC radio, and a viewer of ABC television for the past 22 years. During that time I have witnessed the gradual decline of programme quality, as successive governments have relentlessly cut back ABC budgets.

The ABC is unique in Australia as a source of independent news and information, and an unparalleled outlet for the arts. It has also been a reliable source of news and information to listeners in South East Asia. Its ability to meet its audience's expectations is being severely hampered by under-funding, and a Board that seems not to have the best interests of the ABC and the Australian public at heart.

No commercial broadcaster can replace the ABC. A broadcaster that chases audience ratings and advertising revenue will never present programmes that stimulate the mind and challenge the status quo, or provide reliable information. Only a national broadcaster free of commercial and political constraints can do that.

The present Board and Managing Director of the ABC do not have my confidence, and should resign. I want to see a board that is independent of government and is appointed on the basis of merit and commitment to high quality programming. Board members should have a background in a wide range of arts, sciences, business and technology. They must be able to instil a feeling of confidence and optimism in the ABC staff and the Australian public.

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