

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 August 2001 2:14 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry on ABC Board Appointments

The Secretary,
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts References
Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to register my disapproval of the manner in which appointments are made to the Board of the ABC, and to senior management positions within the ABC.

I am strongly of the view that the strength of our democracy is firmly based on a fearless and independent press that carries no political favours. For as long as the moguls of our commercial media networks choose to gain commercial advantage by fostering close relations with the political party in power, we can never rely on them to proffer honest opinion nor to provide us with a balanced coverage of the news. Only by having a public broadcaster that is not shackled in any way through its management structure can the Australian public be confident that, at all times, they will be kept up to date with activities in the political and corporate world.

During their time in power, our current government has seriously undermined that independence by making the appointment of Managing Director and appointments to the board, of people who have strong affiliations with the government, and in so doing have seriously compromised the independence of the ABC. In addition, they have savagely reduced the funding to the ABC, further limiting the ability of the ABC to fully investigate and report on matters of public interest.

Your inquiry may be our last opportunity to put a stop to this knobbling of our voice of Australia. I implore you to revisit the charter under which the ABC is funded and managed and to put in place processes and procedures that will put the ABC beyond the influence of whatever political party happens to be in power at any time.

Yours sincerely

John Armstrong
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