

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 7 August 2001 9:39 PM  
**To:** ecita.sen@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** Senate enquiry ABC board appointments

In order for Australia to maintain a functioning democracy, its citizens must be able and willing to participate in the political process. We cannot participate effectively if we are not informed. We cannot rely on the privately owned media to give us the information we need. Any commercial organization is compromised by its very nature ---it has to protect its own interests first.

Only a genuinely independent media outlet such as the ABC --- funded with public money --- can fulfill this function. If the public perceives that the ABC is a propaganda outlet for the government ( as is currently the case with " The Continuing Crisis" on ABC radio 621 and the stacking of the Board with Liberal Party ideologues ) there will be a major alienation of the public from engagement with the political process. When this happens, people lose interest in their voting rights and are increasingly unwilling to take part in elections. We must not allow our democracy to be debased in this way. It is in everyone's interests to keep our ABC staunchly independent of government and commercial interests no matter what the costs.

I call on this enquiry and then the parliament to enshrine in legislation, laws to protect the financial and intellectual independence of the ABC, with Board members appointed on the basis of merit and commitment to independent and comprehensive public broadcasting.

Robyn Prent