



PO Box 1083,
SANDY BAY,
Tas 7006

5 April 2006

Committee Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I wish to protest in the strongest terms about the proposed abolition of the staff representative on the ABC Board.

1. It is a long-established principle of good management that employees have some sort of representation on the governing body. The reasons should be too obvious to state. Decision-making should not be all top down: some decisions could be unworkable in a way that only those enacting them could know. Certainly those with no experience in public broadcasting wouldn't know what works and what doesn't—and there are too many of those on the board already.
2. Morale is low at the ABC. This will only make it worse.
3. Stacking the Board entirely with Government nominees clearly conveys the idea that the ABC is not independent but a voice of the Government of the day. A different election result next time and the whole Board could be reconstituted if this becomes a precedent. This is a recipe for chaos. And it is not good policy.
4. Australia deserves a public broadcaster that is not only independent and open-handed in its programmes and their content but is *seen to be so*.
5. We need the ABC in the current situation where almost all media are pro only one side of the political spectrum. The proposed Media Ownership laws will make this much worse of course. I'm not saying the ABC should represent the other side of the political spectrum—it does not, despite many allegations to that effect. I'm saying it should be *independent* of either side.

Thank you for your attention,

Yours sincerely,

(John Biggs)