

Attention: the Senate Committee inquiring into the ABC Amendment Bill 2006

I write as a citizen, privately and personally. I write with misgivings as to the possibility of my effort having any impact **and** my preserving privacy and enough anonymity to protect me and my family from future adverse effects (eg by being placed electronically on a list). Yet I feel impelled to do something, rather than just stewing.

Having recently retired at age 60, I find myself dependent on the ABC for intellectual stimulation, access to what is happening in the world, and analysis of issues that allows me to gain information and to develop views as a voting citizen.

I am also a "highbrow", whose intellectual needs are basically provided by ABC radio and TV; but supplemented by SBS, and occasional reading of *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

As enough of a conservative to be, for example, staunchly opposed to a Republic (as a rejection of our political heritage), I do not understand why a self-proclaimed *conservative* government can go out of its way to change basic institutions such as the ABC. If the changes suggested are insignificant, why make the changes? If they are meant to lead to major change, then where will this lead?

To be more positive, I ask for signs and gestures that the federal government sees itself as a leader in the promotion of the arts and its permeation through receptive and appreciative elements of Australian society, rather than just playing up to mass sentiment (eg sport). The ABC is the backbone of cultural endeavour in Australia, particularly in rural areas; and needs to feel that it has the support of the government.

I want to maintain the present situation of serious music and serious analysis from different viewpoints, as I get on a daily basis -- morning, noon, and night. As a rural citizen (we spend half our time at a small property on the Mitta Mitta River in North-East Victoria) I depend for sanity on the ABC *roughly as it is*.

I belong to an intellectual minority whose rights should be protected.

I also depend on it for day to day survival in emergency situations. *When the fires went through our part of Victoria two years ago the local ABC was a lifeline.*

Please support the ABC and leave it as it is by *rejecting this bill*.

Yours faithfully,
William Dean Watson,