

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment Bill 2006

As a dedicated listener to ABC radio (I haven't got a TV) I am concerned for the future of the ABC. I strongly believe that no legislation should be pushed through the Parliament without the opportunity for adequate public consultation and debate.

I am concerned that abolition of the ABC staff-elected position on the ABC Board is yet another step in the stacking of the ABC Board and aimed at destroying the independence of the ABC. The staff-elected director provides valuable input from the people who produce the national broadcaster's programmes. This is even more important on occasions the government has appointed to the Board no people with public broadcasting experience. I also believe that the staff-elected position on the ABC Board is the sole balance to governments of any persuasion stacking the Board, and that it is good governance to have a member of staff on the Board.

The Government has provided no evidence to demonstrate its claim of conflict of interest. On the contrary, history has shown that ABC staff elect to the ABC Board people who are committed to maintaining the integrity of the ABC. It is the Government's appointees with views and affiliations to bodies opposed to independent public broadcasting that have the conflict of interest.

If the public is to have any confidence in the integrity of the ABC Board, a new assessment process for government appointments is required - one that is merit-based, transparent and independent of government.

Peter D. Jones