

I am from Western Australia, a state which, like South Australia, has already lost its ABC production unit, and I am appalled by the ABC managing director Mark Scott continuation of its centralisation programme with the planned closure of the Tasmanian production unit.

Mr Scott says Tasmania does not have the market needed to justify the costs of running an internal production unit. This is nonsense. The success of programs such as “Collectors”, which was produced in Tasmania, proves that the whole country is a potential market, not just “the locals”.

By making only a partial contribution to a production fund, and then relying on the Tasmanian Government to encourage co-productions with the private sector, the ABC is effectively discharging itself of its obligations.

Confining its regional commitment to the delivery of local news program is a totally inadequate way for the ABC to fulfil its charter.

At a time when the importance and benefits of regionalisation is starting to be recognised, the increasing centralisation of ABC production is a disgraceful aberration.

We are already seeing the quality of the ABC current affairs programs deteriorate as it seeks to save time and money on good investigative reporting, relying instead on biased, privately-funded think tanks and privately-owned media outlets such as the Australian newspaper as its main source of information.

It is therefore worrying to see that the ABC plans to rely more and more on the private sector to speak to Australian audiences, thus increasing the risk of vested interests to use the National broadcaster as a propaganda vehicle.

Australian audiences deserve better. The increased centralisation of the ABC is not just a loss for Tasmania; it is a loss for all of us, including here in Western Australia.