

Subject: ABC Review
Date: Tuesday, 6 September 2011

Dear senators

I write out of grave concern as to the direction taken by the ABC in its attempt (presumably under financial and political pressure) to earn high audience ratings as though it were a commercial organization. Indeed, advertizing (albeit of its own product) is now obtrusive and against the spirit if not the letter, apparently, of its charter. Quality and diversity is what has distinguished the ABC in the past and if conforming to commercial broadcasting standards is to proceed, then the abolition of the ABC will be readily justified.

The contracting out of production has hollowed the organization, becoming more a generalist contract manager than a creative, specialist, cultural and educational institution. This deskilling has grim implications for future generations. I find less and less of quality left on TV apart from current affairs, notably Four Corners. Even Radio National, still the jewel in the ABC crown, despite loss of important programs (not least the religion report) faces further cuts to arts programs.

I find it inexplicable that, despite National Competition Policy since the 1980s, News Limited should own 70% of Australian media. The executives of that company have made plain their antagonism to public broadcasting in Australia and UK: it is allegedly anti-competitive!! They have further designs on our international network despite their failure of the fitness test in UK, where 40% ownership is sufficient to concern both parliament and public.

I trust that the senate review will pay greater attention to the wishes of Australians, urban and regional, in the retention of the ABC as a well funded and independent, public media organization. Privatization by stealth must be halted before it becomes irreversible.

Yours sincerely

Angela Munro