

To:

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100 Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

To my understanding, the ABC continues to state that is less expensive to produce programs externally, rather than completely in house.

This submission addresses two concerns I have regarding the ABC.

1. HOW COSTS ARE CALCULATED. IS INTERNAL PRODUCTION REALLY MORE EXPENSIVE THAN OUTSIDE PRODUCTION?

I am an editor at the ABC. I am paid approximately \$28 per hour, yet the ABC charges the program that I am assigned to, about \$68 per hour for my labour. Even allowing for overheads, I fail to see that \$68 is a true cost for my labour. Yet it is used to calculate the alleged high cost of internal production.

I am currently under-employed. This week and next week I will have no work to do at all. Nothing. I will receive no training, despite requesting it. The ABC will continue to pay my salary but not have internal production for me to work on. But the ABC right now, has outside employees (\$50 to \$55 per hour) working on co-productions, such as the current Chaser program in production. The ABC chooses not to give me work to do, even though it is available. The cost of my idle time will be used to inflate internal production costs, when I could be productively employed on in-house production.

A greater in-house production schedule would lead to a lower cost per program. The overheads are largely fixed, regardless of the number of editors, so economies of scale would apply.

2. QUALITY OF INTERNAL PRODUCTION VS EXTERNAL PRODUCTION

Strictly Speaking was a Southern Star production. It replaced New Inventors timeslot at the end of the series in 2010. It was so bad that although it was finished in 2009 it was not screened until October 2010. And then it was pulled after 5 episodes. A huge waste of money (on outside production) when internally producers could have come up with something better. It rated much lower than New Inventors in exactly the same timeslot.

Triple J TV presents is a half hour of live music. This was previously produced in-house at the ABC. I edited many of the programs. It is now completely outsourced for approximately \$10,000 per episode. This, however does not include the costs of cameras and equipment, or support staff that are provided by the ABC at no expense to the outside production company. (These costs, would, of course be attributed to the program if it were produced internally). Most relevant, however, is the difference in quality between the two incarnations of the show (in-house vs external production). The new, outsourced program is terrible. It is shot badly and edited badly. Cameras wobble and coverage of the live bands is poor. The editing is mediocre to say the least.

This show is the clearest comparison of the two production models that I can think of. It is a very straightforward 'before' and 'after', and the 'after' is severely lacking.

In my experience, ABC staff are prepared to put in the extra work and effort to keep quality as high as possible. When programs are being made to cost, this is not always the case, as demonstrated in the 'Triple J TV presents' example.