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Senate Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senate Committee

RE: Senate Inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporations commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity.

With my family we produce beef cattle, located in the Roper Gulf region of the Northern Territory. We were directly affected by the Live animal export ban in June 2011 and continue to be impacted by reduced trade as a result of Indonesia's ongoing reaction to that ban.

My submission to this enquiry is in relation to the Four Corners programs 'A Bloody Business' (aired 31st May 2011) and 'Another Bloody Business' (aired 5th November 2012), to a lesser extent also the 7.30 report, 'Israeli abattoir...' (aired 11.12.12). I feel ABC have vilified some of the remote regional groups in Australia particularly through the program 'Four Corners'.

In my opinion Four corners utilised suspect information sourced via radical animal rights groups that was intentionally bias against the live animal export industry in Australia in particular against the northern remote areas.

While Four Corners could argue to simply be the messenger of information the programs they produced concerning live animal export were extremely negatively bias. They failed to reflect a honest and fair appraisal of the Live export Industry.

The north of Australia is very different in many ways to the southern and eastern areas of Australia, not only on economic reliance's, but climate, environment resources and remoteness are starkly contrasting across these regions. Four Corners failed miserably in representing the regional diversity of north Australia when producing their damning Live export shows and the significance of this continues to have ramifications on our lives to this day.

I have attached email correspondence I have had with ABC Four Corners and subsequently ABC Audience and Consumer Affairs in regards to numerous complaints and queries I have made concerning the breach of ABC protocol and procedures for editorial purposes of program creation.

In relation to this Senate inquiry terms of reference I will be referring to television programs associated with ABC.

- a) the commitment by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to reflecting and representing regional diversity in Australia;**

I applaud the efforts of programs such as Landline in supply of programming to show the various rural enterprises and operations that occur in Australia. I would like to see programs of this variety increased.

I highly recommend greater funding of ABC resources be supplied to this type of programming to further increase the capabilities of showing rural Australian and remote regional areas to as many viewers as possible.

I feel that the general Australian public need greater appreciation of the volume and reliability of the food source they are fortunate to have access to by simply living in Australia.

"Australian farmers produce almost 93% of Australia's daily domestic food supply". (MLA feedback. Aug 2009)

"In Australia 24% of people are born overseas, 73% of people are urban Australians who know little or nothing about farming, and 64% of people under 65 have never been on a farm". (MLA Feedback. Aug 2009)

Australia has one of the most secure, abundant and healthy food production, processing, distribution and supply systems in the world. In many respects the general public don't appreciate the effort and commitment required by the rural sector to enable the consistency of supply to produce these foods.

Australian produce needs to be promoted and more important the integrity of the people who produce it honestly displayed while the impact of food imports on farmers profitability and long term viability needs to be illustrated to the general public so they can make informed and realistic choices as to the products they wish to purchase and thus the production systems they support.

For example. Food products being produced in Australia are competing in the market place against food products imported from countries that have minimal animal welfare standards or are highly subsidised industries. These unfair competitive advantages require exposure for the Australian public to view.

b) the impact that the increased centralisation of television production in Sydney and Melbourne has had on the ABC's ability to reflect national identity and diversity;

The programming of Four Corners 'A Bloody Business' and 'Another Bloody Business' was initiated by the supply of film in Indonesian abattoirs by Animals Australia. A radical vegan political lobby group intent on the demise of animal production in Australia, they see the consumption of animals by people as morally corrupt. Their main support base is the people who live in highly urbanised areas such as the main capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane.

Animals Australia supplied information and covert film to ABC which lead to ABC carrying out further footage of their own in similar situations in Indonesia, this was

supported by the RSPCA's apparent objectivity. Any form of research by ABC into both of these groups would have revealed both have set policies of pursuing the Banning of live animal export.

Please read the letters that I directed to ABC in regards to the concerns I raised with those programs. Principally I was concerned that ABC Four Corners had breached a number of ABC editorial and procedural guidelines, these relating to fairness of presentation of a balanced view and the reliability and bias of the information supplied.

The main support base for the two organisations RSPCA and AA as previously stated are located in predominately urban areas. Politicians that lobbied to support these groups and activities to Ban live animal export are located in mainly high population urban areas. Certainly not in the remote areas that are less densely populated yet are reliant of Live animal exports and are now desperately affected by its demise.

It is also these same people who have strongly supported the Four corners programming and subsequent vilification of the industry based on the footage shown in the Four corners programs and later the 7.30 report aired 3rd December 2012

Politicians that support a ban of Live animal export.

Politician	Electorate	Electorate characteristics
Kelvin Thompson. Labor	Victoria. Member of Wills.	High CBD density, large industries processing
Hon. Tony Zappia. Labor	South Australia. Member of Makin	
Hon. Darren Cheeseman Labor	Victoria. Member of Corangamite	High Density CBD – Geelong and coastline
Melissa Parke Labor	Western Australia Member of Fremantle	High Density CBD – Port area used by Live export
Janelle Saffin Labor	Queensland. Member of Page	High Density CBD – Coastline.
Steve Georganans Labor	South Australia Member of Hindmarsh	Urban area, coastline,
Hon. Andrew Wilkie Independent	Tasmania Member of Denison	Live transport from Tasmania to mainland
Hon. Christine Milne Greens		
Adam Brandt Greens	Victoria Member of Flemington	Urban area
Hon. Lee Rhiannon Greens	New South Wales	

The Australian Greens party has stated policy as to Ban live export. I have sent Lee Rhiannon many requests to a number of questions regarding the ramifications if a ban on live export was to occur, she was unable to answer many that were related to on-the ground knowledge of the impact. (See <http://wp.me/p2Rd5Y-20>)

These politicians continue to hold the Four corners programs up to public advertisement as proof in their views of what the Live animal export industry is. Few if any of them will experience direct effects of a ban on live exports on the populations of their electorates. These politicians and general publics understanding of the Live export industry is predominantly based on television programs such as Four Corners and propaganda released from websites and facebook pages such as Animals Australia and RSPCA, both with pre-set agendas of a Ban.

As far as I am aware only a very small number of politicians have actually travelled to north Australia to meet the people concerned while even less have actually been to Indonesia and viewed the Australian animal slaughter processes.

I understand that the location of ABC television production needs to be located in highly urbanised areas such as Melbourne and Sydney, I assume for its resource and professional access to the people so as to operate its core business functions of program production.

That location I feel has affected ABC's perception and programing bias to left wing and Greens agendas, these being opinions that are generally supported by the higher population areas of Australia though possibly not the majority of Australians. Due to these bias reporting and focus on these views such as the Live animal export trade it is extremely detrimental to the ABC's ability as a whole to reflect variations of the national identity and diversity. In my opinion it certainly isn't doing that at the present time.

c) other related matters.

It is not my intention of this submission for the inquiry to address the editorial procedures I have raised in my letters to Four corners. I simply wanted them to be aware that there are some of us who have questioned the ABC's accountability and correspondence has been happening in regards to these accusations.

My personal views is that many ABC policies and standards have been breached. Their answers to some of my queries are laughable, such as ABC's reply claiming the two programs 'A Bloody business' and 'Another bloody business' were not directly related. The fact they do this illustrates to me a complete lack of accountability of the programs integrity and responsibilities to present fair and un-bias reporting while pandering to the views of the immediate population an radical group pressures within close location.

As inadequate as I feel the ABC Corporate affairs replies are to my queries they were at least replied too, eventually, with a great deal of reminding and harassing from me to get those replies. The Inquiry must recognise the effort I had to go to so as to receive a reply to my initial letter emailed to Four corners 4th November 2012. I have provided a time chart to illustrate that sequence of events.

I have concerns as to the lack of accountability that Four Corners programmers showed when I initiated my first letter to them.

As you will see in my second letter emailed 2nd December 2012 I have explained that I was unable to send a direct letter to the management of the Four Corners program as their website only allowed email contact access. The fact I didn't send the letter initially through the postal service was cited as a reason for non-response.

Ironically the issue of time to make a complaint seems to be pertinent when Four Corners are questioned but decency in simple acknowledgement of an email or letter isn't required from them to the complainant.

The following is a timeline of the correspondence I had with the ABC in regards to my letters questioning Four Corners adherence to ABC editorial policies, Principles and Standards (2011)

Acronyms

ABC CA – ABC Corporate Affairs – Mr Mark Maley. CORPORATE_AFFAIRS11.ABC@abc.net.au

4C – ABC Four Corners <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/>

fb – Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/abc4corners?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Date	Correspondance / Action	Points to Consider
2011		
May 31st	4C air 'A Bloody Business'	
2012		
November 4th	1st letter to 4C Emailed through 4C website Posted letter on 4C fb https://www.facebook.com/abc4corners/posts/122547651233571	4C website had no advertised address for postal of letter. Only email.
November 5th	4C air 'Another Bloody Business'	
November 6th	Enquire on 4C in regards to response of letter https://www.facebook.com/abc4corners/posts/10151138562670954	I call for an Inquiry required into breach of ABC conduct.
November 7th	4C fb reply "all letters sent through the proper channels (i.e. not our social media platforms) will receive a formal response. Mod".	I Informed 4C fb that website had no address only email portal
November 11th	Emailed 1st letter to ABC Media watch mediawatch@your.abc.net.au	

November 13th	1st letter resent to 4C through Website email.	
November 17th	When will I get even acknowledgment of 1st letter on 4C fb https://www.facebook.com/abc4corners/posts/133951043422235	
	Sent request for address to 4C website	
November 19th	Conversation on twitter – Sarah Ferguson	Sarah Ferguson was the first to give a mailing address.
November 20th	ABC 4C confirmed request 17th	Acknowledged received letter via email and forwarded to ABC Audience & Consumer affairs. Gave no mailing address
November 26th	ABC CA reply to 1st letter “The ABC does not generally investigate complaints that are received more than six weeks after broadcast”	Claims against ‘A Bloody business’ – complaints were received and investigated. Time period for complaints lapsed. Program said to be in keeping with ABC code of practice
December 2nd	2nd Letter Emailed to ABC. Reply to ABC CA Emailed to 4C through website and posted on 4C fb https://www.facebook.com/abc4corners/posts/10151171761890954	Two shows are related and claims are still warranted against ABC procedures No corrections made or acknowledged as S Ferguson said she would in senate inquiry Animal welfare.
December 11th	7.30 report – Air “Israeli abattoir abuse...” Twitter from 7.30 report stating were Australian cattle, actual program said anumber of times this was unconfirmed	Cattle implies all animals shown were Australian, If confirmed by DAFF only one was Australian.
December 12th	Email to ABC CA Screen print of 7.30 report twitter comment	
December 26th	Email to ABC CA	When could I expect a reply to 2 nd letter
2013		
January 3rd	Email from ABC CA	Denies any connection of shows and any wrong doing

It is extremely important to note a number of points in this regard.

1. Four Corners website administrators **never** directly replied to my emails until prompted a number of times.
2. Four Corners facebook administrators failed to defend/explain their actions on their own social media site when I queried them.
 - a. Social media is the modern communication of the current environment and as Four corners were advertising a program that would directly affect me and my family I feel it is important that facebook developed sites appreciate their responsibility to warrant their actions in the public forum when that media is obviously designed to instigate public debate and comments from the general public.
 - b. Four Corners facebook claimed the site wasn't responsible to reply.
3. Social media can be a very powerful tool for the advertisement of the programs contents, such as twitter and facebook. When used as such then the people tweeting the information should be expected to reply to genuine questions as to the validity of the information they provide. This is pertinent to the tweet made on 11th December 2012 the 7.30 report.

At the time of this tweet being released this information wasn't available and the tweeter was queried by me as to the reason they were saying the Australian cattle when the 7.30 report aired on Television had made numerous explanations that at the point of filming this was actually unknown. Even the statement supplied by Livestock Shipping services says one bull was shown that had previously been exported through their channels, yet it wasn't confirmed.

In summary I am extremely disappointed with the way Four Corners conducted itself in regards to the Live export industry, I feel it has not upheld its obligation to show a fair and balanced view of a topic. In this regard it has failed dramatically to fairly reflect and represent the Australian people involved with the live export industry. In doing that it lacked any commitment and integrity in fairly reflecting and representing this portion of regional Australia.

Yours Sincerely

Jo-Anne Bloomfield

Attachments with this submission

1. 1st letter sent by Jo-Anne Bloomfield to ABC 04.11.12. – 5 pages
2. 1st reply from ABC Corporate 26.11.12 – 3 pages
3. 2nd letter sent by Jo-Anne Bloomfield to ABC 02.12.12 – 2 pages
4. 2nd reply from ABC Corporate 03.01.13 – 2 pages
5. Twitter conversation – S Ferguson 19.11.12 - 1 page
6. Twitter conversation – 7.30 report 11.12.12 – 1 page.