

Senate Inquiry into ABC Cuts.
September 8, 2011

I wish to register my shock and dismay at the announcement by the ABC of the axing of Art Nation and the closure of the ABC Arts Unit, the axing of the New Inventors and the Collectors programs.

My understanding was that as part of its charter the ABC catered for a wide variety of Australian tastes. It catered for a diversity of cultural interests and needs. The viability of programmes should not be based on the populist philosophy of other networks. That is what makes the ABC special and one of the tenants of our society.

- There should not be an emphasis on prime time ratings at the expense of committed specialist audiences.
- There should not be drift towards light entertainment programming in the search for ratings.

The planned cuts will impact heavily on public ownership and on regional production. Many highly trained and skilled individuals will be lost from our ABC. They will be forced to the 'other side'...private sector, resulting in higher costs on programs made outside the ABC's highly effective production houses. The ABC and Australian public will have lost the rights to the programmes we have paid for and with that go the loss of effective editorial control over these outsourced programmes. The ABC is being watered down!

The ABC charter would seem to be close to abandonment. I cannot believe that 'base commercialism' and the pressure of the 'mighty dollar' will devalue the creativity and professionalism that has long been our ABC. Sadly our Australianness is being put to the test with the belief that private enterprise can do the job better and cheaper. Some things are worth paying for!

Penelope Shepherd.