

Senate Inquiry re OUR ABC

Dear Senators:

It is with great concern that I learn that our ABC is undergoing several changes, not to the advantage of the viewing public nor that of the staff of the ABC.

Over recent months the Natural History Unit, which has functioned extremely well in the past, has been closed and TV documentaries are being outsourced. I am also aware that the ABC plans to axe the remainder of the Arts program and to disband the Arts Unit.

It seems to me that the ABC is being commercialised by stealth, that the pride that we viewers have held for many years in our ABC is being forfeited to promote commercial interests. I am a viewer who does not view the commercial channels. The ABC has always satisfied my desire to have intelligent and well-produced programs unlike a lot of the imported programs on commercial stations that have little substance.

It is very sad to see a cultural icon being treated in this way, instead of maintaining pride in the kind of TV that our own people can produce.

I expect the ABC to be a producer of innovative quality programming in all areas, and I want the ABC to be less dependent on outsourced programming. The ABC should be rebuilt and funded adequately so that it has strong specialist units and produces high levels of quality programs as an integral part of Australian culture. We, as taxpayers, deserve and pay for an institution of the highest calibre.

The ABC is and should remain a valued institution for the education, enjoyment and pride of all Australian citizens with its quality programming on radio TV and online. I would also like the Enquiry to make sure that the ABC is monitored properly so that the organisation adheres to its charter to be unbiased, to give adequate attention to matters of substance and not to fall into the trap that so many of the commercial media have fallen into, of the 'sound-bite' and the grab for headlines, at the expense of veracity.

Yours respectfully,  
Margaret J. Roberts