

Re: Regional diversity and the ABC

I was shocked to hear that the ABC are cutting programs and staff in areas of Australia such as WA and Tasmania.

As a resident of WA, I can confirm to you that life here is completely different from the 'Eastern seaboard'. WA constitutes one-third of the country, and a massive, diverse landscape. WA is also the economic hub of the country, which, ironically supports an ABC that wants to close it down! The mentality and lifestyle of people in WA is very different from places such as NSW and Victoria, and it is essential that the ABC has a greater presence here, not less.

The mix of population in WA is very different from other states. We have a long-standing relationship with Asia and the communities of the Indian Ocean: our 'mentality' is closely linked with this region, and this mentality does not exist anywhere else in Australia. This century has been dubbed the 'Asian Century', and WA is very much linked to Asia, not just economically, but how we see ourselves positioned in the world-view. In relation to this, WA also has a very different CaLD (Culturally and linguistically diverse) mix, unlike any other state in Australia. This also makes WA very different. Again, WA's position in Asia and the Indian Ocean make it essential that the ABC's presence here is upgraded, not down-graded.

In WA, we already suffer from a lack of coverage by the ABC. ABC's programs, such as dramas and current affairs, are usually biased toward Sydney and Melbourne. I think that the ABC should be required to give out statistics re how much it covers of each part of Australia. I believe the stats will show that the coverage is incredibly unbalanced and biased towards the traditional and conservative view that Sydney and Melbourne are the centres of Australia. I think these stats will show that the other areas of Australia need more ABC presence, not less.

It appears to me that the ABC 24-Hour service is sucking the funds from the ABC budget. I have to say that ABC 24-Hour is very weak, even though so much of the ABC budget is being sunk into it. It is repetitive and lacks quality journalism. I would request that interested parties watch SBS in the afternoons with the consecutive news services from Al Jazeera, 'The Journal', and PBS to see what quality news services are really about. The money would be better spent on maintaining coverage of the diversity of Australia, not shutting parts of Australia down.

(As a WA resident, I am speaking for WA, but I am also a supporter of Tasmania, which also has its own 'culture' and uniqueness unlike anywhere else in Australia. Like WA, Tasmania also suffers from being dropped off the map!)

Moves by the ABC seem to be political moves inasmuch as someone or some people are wanting to create a kingdom in one part Australia.

These moves are also retrograde: there is a type of 'Captain Cook' mentality; certain people can only see Sydney Cove and apparently the rest of Australia doesn't exist.

I would imagine that with so many laws concerning equal opportunity for all people in Australia that the ABC is compelled to represent all areas of Australia. These are the laws of the time, of this century; not Sydney Cove in the eighteenth century. It is an ethical and legal imperative that the ABC, as a tax-payer funded agency in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has more presence in regions such as WA and Tasmania, not less.