

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to comment on the ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity. I have been a lifelong supporter of the ABC and am now 80. I have also been and still am a member of Friends of the ABC and was WA President of this organisation for some years. I am aware of the terms of reference set out by the committee.

1 The commitment by the ABC to reflecting and representing regional diversity in Australia

2 The impact that the increased centralisation of TV production in Sydney and Melbourne has had on the ability of the ABC to reflect national identity and diversity and

3 The impact these changes have had on WA and Tasmania.

The loss of the ABC Production Unit in Tasmania has resulted in the loss of local identity and diversity for that state. The Collectors has been "rested" and Gardening Australia when hosted by Peter Cundall. Both programmes enabled national viewers to enjoy the distinctly Tasmanian quality of these presentations. More recently we have seen the broadcasting of the bushfires from a local perspective by people who have a unique understanding of the Tasmanian scene.

Although contributing to the nation's wealth and diversity, Western Australia has little representation on the ABC with cuts to programmes such as "Can We Help" and 'Rollercoaster'. Q and A has been hosted twice in 4 years in WA and there has been an overwhelming domination by guests from Sydney with few from WA. There has been considerable opposition from federal Senators, to the cuts in Tasmanian production.

With the loss of skills and expertise across Australia we are seeing a dumbed down commercial representation of current affairs and news. News 24 seems to many to be a copy of the sort of news we see on commercial TV. Do we need another outlet for this sort of news grab? If closure of the State facilities has been brought about to fund News24, then I believe this has been a bad decision. I strongly believe that maintenance of staff and facilities in all regional centres would go some way to ensure the ABC keeps its longstanding excellent reputation.

Harry Cohen AM