

Submission to Senate Inquiry on The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity.

I am one of the staff directly affected by the closure of the TV production unit in Hobart. The ABC has invested considerable time and money over the 25 years of my employment developing my professional skills.

After 25 years at the ABC, I have seen considerable change in the organisation, and not all for the better. The disintegration of internal production seems to me to have been a quite deliberate campaign of some years duration. The demise of internal production units, especially outside Sydney means that programming is not representative of the regional diversity of this country, and is quite sad for a long-term employee to witness.

The selection of programs made in Tasmania has not in recent years represented the richness of Tasmanian stories. The ABC has required the sort of programs which could have been made anywhere. The lack of such stories on a national broadcaster is nothing short of pathetic, and is certainly not doing what Mark Scott keeps telling staff he wants to happen: TELLING AUSTRALIAN STORIES and REFLECTING THE REGIONAL VOICE OF AUSTRALIA. The regional voice of Australia is not in Melbourne, and it is certainly not in Sydney.

I consider that the ABC is not fulfilling its charter, and this is nowhere more evident than in the sad remnants of arts programming on the network. The dissolution of the Arts Unit in Melbourne is a travesty of the programming the Australian public deserves. The ABC says that Arts coverage on radio fulfils the charter, but I beg to differ.

One of the more disturbing trends in programming recently is the astonishing number of English/BBC programs. 'QI' is one programme so often broadcast that it is ridiculous.

The closure of the TV production unit in Hobart means that I am seriously considering returning to Melbourne to work. If that work is not at the ABC, the very skills in which the ABC has invested over so long are lost to the organisation.

Ruth Jennings