

Inquiry: Recent ABC programming decisions.

I wish to make a submission to the Senate inquiry about the proposals to further cut-back ABC in-house programming and replace it with non-ABC programmes.

I have worked for the ABC for over 25 years.

In my job application I was asked to make a statement about my understanding of the role of the ABC in the community.

This was my reply in 1985:

“The ABC provides a different service to that of commercial stations. We are able to view education and human interest programmes not found on other stations. There is a greater variety of programmes than on a commercial station to satisfy all sections of the community and contribute to a sense of national identity”

I was seventeen years old when I wrote this.

After working for the corporation now for over 25 years I still believe these words, but my fear is that if the ABC continues to cut back its in-house production, replacing it with programmes made by commercially orientated outside production companies, it will lose its ‘uniqueness’. It will lose the unique ability it has to provide a broad range of content for the Australian public. It will lose its unique ability to tell the stories that are commercially not worth telling. It will lose its unique ability to be a trusted voice to Australians.

Ultimately what the network loses is its significance to the Australian public. The network has been a significant voice to Australians and new Australians for over 50 years. But if the network doesn’t make anything itself, if it doesn’t do anything itself, if it gives its voice to others who are swayed by commercial interests, if it forgoes a once heavily guarded influence over the message that Australian society hears, then it largely becomes insignificant. It becomes an insignificant voice where once it stood out to the people of Australia.

I believe in the ABC, and I like the voice that it has had for over 75 years. I believe that it has served this country well and been at the forefront of helping Australia know what it is and where it fits in the world.

Please do not allow the ABC to take its voice and give it to others.