

Inquiry to the Environment and Communications Reference Committee

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking B1?”

“I think I am B2”

“We’re going to have to go on the dole!”

This inquiry is in response to the announcement made by the television management of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on 2nd August 2011 to significantly cut the number and amount of ABC-produced programs, jobs (including forced redundancies) and potentially affected resources.

I disagree with this motion by the ABC’s management and believe this to be the epitome of ‘un-Australianness.’ I do not feel the current management team have considered the full implications and ramifications of these actions. This decision WILL ultimately affect the ABC’s ability to create, produce and own its television content. Being Australia’s only public-funded television channel, this would come as a great loss to our national identity and its long history of televised programming, not to mention having a potential impact in the quality and diversity of its programs.

The ABC has always been Australia’s channel, for both young and old. Their variety of programs has always catered for the likes of all viewers. This of course means that many of the staple shows unique to the ABC will be dearly missed. Programs such as *Bananas in Pyjamas* will lose ownership of their content, rights and subsequent intellectual property to Southern Star Endemol Pty Ltd. Highly regarded as one of Australia’s most recognisable shows, to think that it will be outsourced to Korean animation studio is simply the most damaging impact from these actions.

Some of the nation’s leading programs for science, arts and innovation, e.g. *Art Nation*, *The New Inventors*, as well as the online content of *Arts Gateway*, will cause a huge void in Australia’s cultural and scientific realms. This decision will significantly cut many programs only found on the ABC and to axe them would be detrimental to Australia’s showcase of invention, design and art. Not to mention the potential axing of one of the nation’s most popular musical trivia shows: *Spicks and Specks*.

The future impacts on ABC’s capacity to broadcast state league football, rugby and lawn bowls will also see a drastic change in Australia’s sport programming. As the ABC closes down its production units in WA and SA this will ultimately affect hundreds of jobs throughout these communities. These areas have well be known for their long history of factual programs, such as *The Cook and the Chef*, *George Negus Tonight*, *Talking Heads* and a variety of cricketing documentaries.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the committee that the ABC is taxpayer funded and if they go through with these decisions then this will ultimately mean a loss of viewers and a loss of government funding. The ABC is obligated under its Charter to provide programming that represents the Australian identity through arts, science and sports. Not only do these cuts fail to meet with its chartered responsibilities but it’s also the most un-Australian act likely to be encountered in the history of Australian television.

In closing, I am requesting a full public inquiry into the ABC to include an audit of its funding, governance and purpose.