

Subject: Submission on the ABC
Date: Sunday, 20 January 2013 5:14:58 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I trust this is the appropriate means to lodge my views on the direction I see the ABC to have taken over the last few years.

There was a time not so long ago when watching or listening to the news and current affairs programs on the ABC was sacrosanct. You felt uninformed if you missed more than a day or two of broadcasts. You trusted the ABC to give you the facts and to be reasonably balanced in their commentary, particularly in politics. This I feel is no longer the case. For at least a year I have avoided watching or listening to any news reporting on ABC TV or radio. The balance is no longer there! It seems that the ABC must now filter everything through the "prism" of News Limited and The Australian, entities which no reasonable person could consider balanced or unbiased. On ABC radio it seemed that every bulletin began with "The leader of the opposition says....."Before you even knew what the issue was that was subject to the comment.

I am aware that the ABC has constantly been accused of having a left-wing bias by the conservative forces in our society and that numerous investigations have always cleared the organisation of this so-called bias. Ironically, I'm now in the other camp which says that the ABC has become a reactionary organisation defending the corporate and moneyed power brokers and siding with vested interests against the public good.

I live in regional NSW and rely on ABC Illawarra when I do listen to radio. I find it soporific and tedious in the extreme. Not one announcer is prepared to make any comment which could be regarded as contentious and discussion on any topic is invariably one-sided and shallow. Guests are rarely challenged. Only one side is ever interviewed and opposing comments are apparently unwelcome. The subjects chosen for audience discussion on any morning or afternoon would have you believe we live in Never-Never Land with Peter Pan and Wendy.

For your interest I find these comments apply also to The Fairfax newspapers which are now greatly diminished versions of their previous "lives" and appear to be heading into oblivion. There is not a single commentator in Fairfax who I regard with any respect anymore. They have been neutered by management, a standing which also applies to the ABC.

Thank goodness for the Internet and the blogosphere. The Guardian Online cannot come soon enough for this disillusioned former friend of the ABC.

Sincerely

John Underwood