

Dear Senate Inquiry Members,

The ABC is very important to me and my family, and is the first port of call for reliable facts on any topic or current situation. The ABC has the ability to cover issues that commercial broadcasters dare not touch, for fear of jeopardizing their advertising revenue. However, I am concerned that the ABC is gradually being privatized by stealth and I strongly oppose these moves to do so.

I am concerned about current and proposed changes, such as the demise of the ABC's acclaimed Natural History Unit and the out-sourcing of all TV documentary and drama. I understand the ABC now plans to sack program-makers and outsource more television production to the private sector.

I also understand that ABC management plans to axe *The New Inventors* and 'rest' *Collectors*, will axe *Art Nation* (its only TV arts magazine program) and disband its TV arts unit. Such plans seriously diminish the ABC's role as an archivist of important Australian artistic achievements.

The ABC plans to close TV production units altogether in some states, I believe, such as mine (SA). Thus what becomes of the "national" in National Broadcaster?

Australia's public broadcaster is being transformed into a platform for programs that are made by the same companies that make commercial television content, and with an eye to commercial sales after first screening on the ABC. The community is rapidly losing the ABC as the innovator and producer of diverse programs of cultural value and intellectual integrity that it is meant to be.

And yet, despite problems, the ABC is still in the forefront of digital broadcasting and the move to new technologies - much to the chagrin of private-for-profit broadcasters and newspaper owners, who would love to see the ABC weakened, in their own commercial interests. This Senate Inquiry must not allow this to happen. The ABC is a valuable Australian community asset that must not be debased.

Too many promos of own-programs/products show a corporation that is desperate for funds - the ABC needs better funding, and I believe most Australians value "Our ABC" and are happy for it to be better supported through government funding (which is, after all, our own - the voters' - money).

I understand changes that will reduce Radio National arts programming by almost one-sixth are also being considered at this time. This will be detrimental to the arts in Australia - surely something other than (mostly men's) sport must be a priority somewhere in our nation?

I expect the ABC to be a producer of innovative quality programming in all areas. I want:

1. the ABC to be less dependent on outsourced programming
2. the ABC to be well-funded and rebuilt so that it has strong specialist units to produce high levels of excellent quality and genuinely local in-house programming in all genres on radio, TV and online
3. a public broadcaster that is focused on diversity and quality, not ratings or making money.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views with you.

Yours sincerely,

**Mary-Ann Lovejoy**