

To the Senate Enquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation:

Honourable Senators,

I am seriously concerned with recent actions taken by the ABC Board and am hopeful that the Senate Enquiry may result in reversals of some seemingly unwise decisions.

The structural changes and the cancellation of several of its better programs appear to contradict the ABC's Charter and its admirable role in the cultural life of Australia. The commercial-free ABC and its presentation of Australian culture is one of the most enviable, most valuable aspects of Australian life, and is one of the key reasons why I as a migrant have made this my home. I am very proud of our internationally unique broadcasting service, although it is showing some unfortunate signs of deterioration.

I am an avid Radio National listener who would like to tune in to 774 occasionally to keep in touch with what's happening locally. But each time I do, I soon have to tune out again as the content has come to be so similar to trivial commercial programming, apparently in the chase for ratings. I'm extremely pleased when the ABC achieves higher ratings, but it should not be allowed to chase them by lowering standards.

In terms of TV we have always looked to the ABC for quality, and to keep us informed – particularly on Australian arts and culture – the sort of programming that commercial channels wouldn't touch.

It seems unthinkable that the arts unit of the ABC is to be discontinued. Just quickly, what I would like to say about cancelled programs is:

Art Nation represents what little we have left of previously extensive art programming in the days when entire Sunday afternoons were devoted to the arts to begin with. On its own, the brief Art Nation could hardly expect to provide comprehensive arts news, but at least it kept us advised of some of what was happening in the arts area. I relate this move to discontinued Radio National programming of the Religion Report. I am not a church-attender, but really valued the weekly information on what was happening in the churches, synagogues and mosques of the country in the 8.30 a.m. Religion Report. Thankfully we have not yet lost the Health and Law Reports at that time.

The Collectors contributes greatly to development of collective interest in museums, history and design, not to mention being an enjoyable human interest program and therefore happily representative of that aspect of our culture. As a full time worker in the heritage/historical industry I deplore the cancellation of this program.

The Inventors: Why? When we have a program that is not only involving but also provides great encouragement to the innovative Australian nature – an education in design, merchandising, materials and clever thinking – why would we scrap it? Weren't we aiming to be the *Clever Country*? Weren't we aiming for increased productivity?

The discontinuation of such material, possibly to make room for more populism and lowered standard of production in order to attract more of the less discerning public is a betrayal of the ABC's charter.

In parting may I enquire why the ABC is considering cancelling Lawn Bowls when such a growing portion of our population may be involved? I await with horror the day we can no longer get our VFL games and results because the ABC has dropped that, too.

I beg the Enquiry to consider the wisdom of allowing lowered standards, populism and the discontinuation of lower-rating themes it is chartered to uphold.

Sincerely
Ms Pat Grainger

