

I am strongly opposed to the out-sourcing of production by the ABC and the reduction of the in-house capacity to produce programs. The ABC has long been the place for novice production people to hone their skills outside the commercial arena. Why is this important? Because some of our media graduates would like to make stories rather than dollars. And they have principles about the hours they spend on the subjects they are bringing to the viewer. They would rather do a documentary on a moth than an expose on Botox. Documentaries in their truest form is a staple of the ABC that I am happy to pay for in my taxes. ABC comedy and drama series are also in this category. High quality, inventive and great viewing (if sometimes challenging).

The current information on the out-sourcing of production seems to suggest that the original intent of utilising small 'independent' companies to bolster creativity in the media is no longer supportable as those smaller companies are increasingly accumulated by larger media organisations. So the ABC are actually in danger of depleting their own skill base and becoming reliant on companies that are a small off-shoot of a large vertical media conglomerate.

The current 'business' plan needs to be examined more closely. The ABC has a charter to produce media for this country that has Australian content. The corollary to this is the employment of Australians to produce this content. Granted independent companies employ citizens. However the 'content' of what is produced by independent companies is measured by commercial means. I am concerned that the ABC seems increasingly concerned with producing material that will have a commercial sale price.

The following transcript of an email about the ending of The New Inventors illustrates my views on current ABC practice and what will be lost by being driven by audience numbers. Quality production and community values are what the ABC used to stand for. I hope this continues to be our ABC in the future :

"I am strongly voicing my total disapproval of the ABC decision to end The New Inventors. This program is on my must watch list every week. It continues to amaze and delight me when I witness the innovation and imagination of inventors in Australia. Their determination and personal commitment is often extraordinary. This program offers a platform for such innovation and I am sure has inspired others to think of better ways to approach tasks and problems. To discontinue this program is simply disgraceful. The ABC is meant to enhance our community. How many safer tools, methods or working etc have been developed with the support of TNI? How many environmental products, health solutions and items that provide physical safety and independence? How short sighted and out of touch with your mandate as the National free-to-air channel."

Carol Rea