

The Senate Inquiry into recent ABC Program Decisions:

The ABC has had a proud history of supplying well-researched and in depth programs of Australian and world affairs and the production of high quality drama and cultural programs as well as intriguing entertainment programs. This has been slipping away gradually here and there, such as in loss of house-produced drama and some programs being repeated too frequently so air-time can be filled. This is not a trend which will benefit the Australian community if it is not halted and reversed.

If you do not have at least a relatively small proportion of the community well-informed as the ABC has done, the whole society does not have the conventional and the convenient readily challenged. We need it for a democracy to work. If people are less equipped to open up the substantial questions the mantra of everyone having a say is based on the lowest common denominator.

We need our own cultural pursuits to be reflected to us, to understand ourselves as a people.

We talk of education being all important for our advanced western society to survive in the present times. How is it that some are so strongly moving to denude the ABC of its capacity to produce high level programs and to cripple our most available means of continuing education? What else is so placed to enable people to be alert and alive to consequential issues and to the enjoyment of the richness of our own culture?

On these grounds alone I agree that the ABC should 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 funded and rebuilt so that it has strong specialist units to produce high levels of high quality and genuinely local in-house programming in all program genres on radio, TV and online
3. a public broadcaster that is focused on diversity and quality, not ratings .

Though I am a graduate of Melbourne University with two degrees I would not be able to keep up with such a broad spectrum of developments in the world and in Australia were it not for the contribution of the ABC. It even helps me to be somewhat abreast of the thought form of younger generations for which I am grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Hadkinson,