

Further for Submission to Senate Inquiry

There is growing concern in the Australian public and by many notaries of the public with respect to the ABC production cuts and increase in outsourcing of production in the ABC.

Since lodging my submission there has been a lot of debate in the media regarding the cuts. Particular interest is the debate regarding the cuts ABC's Arts program and Lawn Bowls coverage.

ABC Arts

The ABC made the decision to cut *Art Nation* and with a lot of public campaigning about the cuts to ABC Arts, Mark Scott advised that the ABC is still committed to meeting its Charter obligations with respect to coverage of arts in Australia.

Despite this media release Mark Scott then followed this with an announcement to the National Press Club that there would be changes to the Arts programming on National Radio and the cut of the dedicated Arts program and an amalgamation of arts and literature in the one program.

The decisions about arts programming in the ABC raises the question as to whether Mark Scott really is seeking to provide proper representation of Australian arts on the ABC.

With the cuts to the art programming in the ABC, there is no way that the ABC can continue to internally produce its arts programming. There will be losses of experience, qualified staff in the ABC through the production cuts, leaving the ABC without the sufficient resources to be able to provide internally produced programming.

If the ABC, and specifically Mark Scott, were truly committed to providing arts programming that meets its Charter then there should not be cuts to programming in the ABC.

The ABC is meant to provide specialised programming for niche communities. The aspiration that the ABC will be using resources to create arts material for primetime is on a premise that the ABC should be focused on commercial television markets. Although I am supportive of the Australian Arts Community, I find it difficult to see the ABC broadcasting performing arts material during prime time.

So I ask, whether the ABC decisions regarding arts programming are based on meeting charter obligations and providing specialised programs for niche communities or another step in the current governance of the ABC to focus on a commercial market environment?

Local Sports

The ABC confirmed that lawn bowls will no longer be broadcast by the ABC. Again, I state that the ABC's Charter is designed to provide the Australian public with specialised programming that is not available on commercial channels.

Lawn bowls coverage reaches 200,000 – 500,000 viewers, this is a prime example of a niche community whose local sport has coverage on the ABC. The ABC for 30 years has provided viewers who enjoy lawn bowls the opportunity to watch games when they are not able to attend.

With this decision being made there is great concern that the ABC will then pull its coverage of other local sports like SANFL and WANFL. Mark Scott has not confirmed or denied whether the ABC will continue to cover local sports, but when looking at the current decisions being made, there is no doubt that there is a trend in cuts to broadcasting.

What the axing of local sports will mean is a definite loss of viewers and the specialised programming that makes ABC unique. There lies the question that needs to be clearly answered by the ABC, whether it will continue to commit to broadcasting local sports (including the reinstatement of lawn bowls) and provide broadcasting which represents regional Australia and its sense of National identity.