



29 September 2016

Dear Committee Members,

ABC Friends National - the not-for-profit organisations that champions ABC funding and independence - has already made a submission to the Standing Committee's inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Rural and Regional Advocacy) Bill 2015.

Please accept this message as an indication that ABC Friends National is keen to make verbal submissions to the inquiry as well and answer any questions, if it should please the committee. It follows our detailed earlier paper on the various issues you as a committee are considering.

We would like to emphasise to committee members our view of the importance in preventing the creation of "two ABCs" - that is one for regional and rural Australia, and a separate organisation catering for metropolitan needs.

It is paramount that any decisions regarding the ABC's direction are made by its own board and management, that the ABC properly covers, and caters for, all Australians, and that the corporation be given the resources it needs to properly fulfil its charter responsibilities.

In our last federal teleconference, our state Presidents were unanimous in asking us to additionally emphasise the importance of the ABC being more transparent in revealing details of its budgetary decisions.

The manner in which the ABC budget is reported in the annual report is limited and fails to detail real expenditure. For example there are no comparative tables showing how much is allocated to purchasing UK content compared with budget allocation to Australian made content.

This compromises the capacity of the organisation itself (and, indeed, ABC Friends) to communicate the very destructive nature of budgetary cut backs and the impacts they have had on various areas of the ABC.

We are very grateful for your kind consideration of our request.

Many thanks,

Margaret Reynolds and Ranald Macdonald,  
National Spokespersons ABC Friends National