

Inquiry into the ABC

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please do not let the ABC stop making The New Inventors series. My family wants to watch Australian shows on television and the light entertainment on commercial stations includes as much product placement and advertising as is legal to make a profit. The New Inventors teaches my children that everyone can think and act. That hard work can bring ideas to life. All in an entertaining way. And it shows people from all over the country.

Is it really cheaper to make content outside of the ABC? Or are a few production companies about to become even richer? The co-productions mentioned in the press are made by a handful of companies in Sydney and Melbourne. Or even mainly Sydney. With all of this talk of outsourcing at the ABC we've started to play a game at my house. We guess which Australian shows on television on the ABC are made by the ABC and which ones are co-produced or outsourced. There doesn't seem to be too much left so I don't see why it is suddenly too expensive.

I think that it is more expensive to make things outside of the ABC, and that when the ABC can no longer make programs they won't have any more money to make co-productions than they do now and will say, 'sorry, we won't be showing many Australian shows now as it costs too much'.

Remember the last few years when the ABC stopped even co-producing hardly any Australian drama? And how the natural history unit was closed down and now there are hardly any good Australian nature documentaries made by the ABC even in co-production? And how over the last few decades regional news and current affairs coverage has been gutted? This is because there is nothing in the Act or Charter to say that the ABC has to produce content outside of Sydney and Melbourne, or even that it has to produce any content itself. This should be changed. Please change the ABC Act and Charter so that the ABC has to make content, and make it all over the country. That's why it is there and why our taxes support the ABC.

The commercial stations don't make programs outside of mainly Sydney and Melbourne because it costs too much. When they do make shows, their aim is to make a profit. If the only Australian content made for television is made by those with commercial interests then the very independence of the ABC is at stake. This is why we have a national television public broadcaster. To make content that has no commercial aims, and that values all of Australia. Not just made where it is cheap for production companies to make programs, following up ideas they think will make them money.

If the ABC makes the programs then the ABC retains the copyright and can decide who can use the content in other programs. This is important culturally and politically. In co-productions will the ABC always retain all copyright? It doesn't seem likely. How is it less expensive for the ABC to make Bananas in Pyjamas outside of the ABC and lose the copyright?

Please act to save the ABC, and the New Inventors. There is more to Australia than the big urban centres and a commercial mindset.

Yours,
Alex Robinson