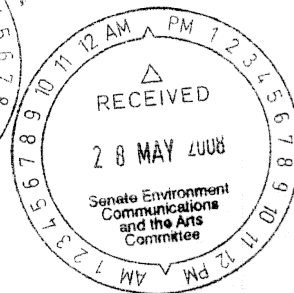
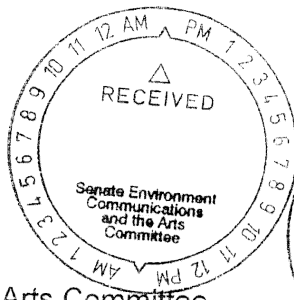


27 May 2008

The Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Secretary

Inquiry into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. I apologise for the lateness of my submission, the reason being that I have just heard about the inquiry.

I would like to express my deep frustration and disappointment at the inadequacy of the current regulation (or lack thereof) of broadcasting standards.

My personal experience is that the current system is ineffective, and needs to be strengthened.

The example I can give is of a complaint made several years ago (but under the same system which exists currently). I complained about an item on SBS TV, which was patently offensive. After following the prescribed steps (ie writing to SBS, waiting 60 days for a response, sending the response to the Australian Communications and Media Authority ('ACMA')), the item was found to be in breach of SBS' own Code of Practice. However there was **no consequence whatsoever** for SBS (apart from having nominally found to have breached its own Code).

This is a demonstrably deficient system. It sends a message to the broadcasters that they can, in effect, do whatever they like (even against their own written standards), and have no real penalty. It is also disheartening for those who are concerned by the (it seems) ever diminishing standards on TV and radio, and who feel let down by the current regulatory system.

I would be most grateful if the Committee recommends, and the Government implements, a significant strengthening of this system, for example by providing for enforceable penalties for broadcasters who breach an objective standard, set either by the broadcaster or (preferably) the Government.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to your inquiry.