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Sent: Wednesday, 8 August 2001 11:18 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: Inquiry on ABC Board Appointments

Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, IT and the Arts References Committee

INQUIRY ON ABC BOARD APPOINTMENTS

I am writing to express my concern about current directions at the ABC and to urge the Committee to recommend the introduction of a new system to appoint ABC Board members.

As someone who watches and/or listens to the ABC daily, I have been greatly saddened by actions taken by the ABC's Managing Director, Jonathon Shier, and by the ABC Board. The ABC Board has rarely protested at the Government's damaging cuts to the ABC, or the Government's attempts to undermine the independence of the ABC. It has appointed a Managing Director with little apparent management ability or understanding of public broadcasting, and has failed to step in to halt the sackings and resignations of experienced and talented staff.

The current Board and Managing Director should resign.

The system of appointing the ABC Board must be changed to ensure that appointments are based on merit and commitment to independent, quality public broadcasting, not on political allegiances. This can't be achieved under a system where the Government of the day is able to stack the Board with its own appointments.

The ABC is vital to Australia's cultural and political life. I urge the Committee to provide a constructive means of defending the ABC from attacks on its integrity and independence.

Yours sincerely

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