

From: Elizabeth [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 5 August 2001 2:00 PM
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Subject: Senate Inquiry on ABC Board Appointments

The Secretary,
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts References
Committee, S157

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to express my deep concern at the politicisation of current appointments to the Board of the ABC. The Board's present chairman Donald McDonald is an acknowledged friend of the Prime Minister and has publicly expressed support for Mr. Howard. Mr. McDonald and the present government in turn have supported the Managing Director Jonathan Shier, whose dismal management record (resignation of key staff, drop in ratings, lack of new programmes, ad hoc appointments to managerial staff positions) speaks for itself and would be tolerated in no other organisation. Neither the current Chairman nor Managing Director has confronted the government over the continued emasculation of the ABC through funding cuts resulting in the loss of talented staff and lowered audience ratings.

If we are to be "the clever (and informed) country" we must have a commitment to an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster. Such a commitment requires that future appointments to the ABC's board are based on the merit principle and a belief in the existence of a strong, national broadcaster, independent of the government of the day.

Yours faithfully,

Elizabeth Lawrence