

From: Graham Ringer
Sent: Monday, 28 November 2005 4:48 AM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review
Subject: submission

SUBMISSION

I would like to submit to the Government that the funding that was stripped from the A.B.C. in 1996 be returned in full and the shortfall in every subsequent year returned to the A.B.C. as well. I would like funding to the A.B.C. to be indexed in some way each year so that funding in real terms does not fall.

Maybe then we could see an Australian-produced Four Corners every week, see less repetition of television programs and more original Australian drama funded by the National broadcaster.

The funding situation has become critical and funding must be substantially increased in order for the A.B.C. to enact its charter obligations to inform, educate and entertain.

Graham Ringer

From: Helen Fenbury
Sent: Friday, 2 December 2005 10:16 AM
To: Webmaster
Subject: Small submission to your ABC Funding review

Public Submission from Helen Fenbury

I was pleased to hear two days ago that you will accept public submissions. Here is mine, brief and hastily written, to encourage a move towards adequate funding of our public broadcaster, such as most Australians are known to favour:

First, I stress what an important part our public broadcaster plays, right across the country, in keeping a sense of national identity strong. There are many ways in which it links us both locally and nationally. In this is responsive to changing times. It gives unmatched access to Australian music, drama and so on, including distinctive styles of humour that carry a sense of belonging. That must contribute a lot to how well we've managed the swell of cultural diversity.

Second (and this detail reflects back to how the ABC's part works for a sense of Australian identity) is the unique resource pattern that the ABC has developed in the scope and accessibility of its multiple national and local media services. Its national-reach radio comes in four distinct focus/audience clusters; and those audiences are also served by local radio - I believe through around 60 local stations, through which plenty of community building must happen. Radio Australia - happily in restoration - is a vital element in Australian outreach in Asia. Then there are the two TV stations and - back to radio - digital internet services. Supplementing it all now is ABC Online: well-presented, with uncluttered format that is easy to use, with excellent links. ABC Online is a great educational boon, used a lot by students and teachers for well-researched current material - as I know through working part-time at a resource centre that caters for them.

Third is the distinctive content pattern that brings together for us quality Australian creativity, and insights into current knowledge in science, study of society, and life and cultures in other countries. Some examples:

Australian drama: a great ABC tradition, that now needs urgent rescue before the broadcaster's experience and resources are quite dissipated.

The latest in science, including medical, agricultural, marine, etc., with good focus on relevance in Australia. For high quality and a far audience reach is Robyn Williams's RN Science Show an Australian icon, and Channel 2's much-watched Catalyst. Again, unique public access resources with painfully tight funding.

Fine music: Through FM radio especially, a vital everyday link between Australian musicians (established and in the making), orchestras, and the Australian public.

Aboriginal cultures: a growing body of good-quality presentations (e.g. TV's Message Stick) through Channel 2, RN and some local radio - a section of the latter having played a leading role in communication within/ between Aboriginal cultures themselves.

Other arts and literature: A good range (through book readings, interviews, critiques) that fleshes out links to traditional quality creative work. Programs made for child audiences are important here.

Analysis and discussion: Plenty that's good quality, often Australia-relevant and so easily accessible at leisure in our own homes. Radio National is especially strong here; e.g. Life Matters, Bush Telegraph, Late Night Live, the Boyer Lectures and Big Ideas, and Background Briefing. The latter, a 50+ minute Sunday program, has given us well-researched, consistently coherent presentations of complex issues in today's world, in Australia and beyond. Pod-casting now makes this and other available when the listener wants; and the program yields rich Online reference. I suspect it now lives on a very modest income indeed.

With this richness of the ABC's offerings and impacts, I haven't been surprised when visiting friends from elsewhere comment on our public broadcaster with surprised admiration. For me, friends from UK, Sweden and USA; and that happens not to have been in the past year or two. I think now they would have found less of these lines of quality on ABC TV.

Here, keeping an alert eye and ear to the ABC, there are so many signs that is held together with a good deal of stress and strain; and we are seeing some quality decline, and cut-backs. Adding in graphs I've seen of funding decline of the ABC over many years now, I believe the organisation must be about at a tipping point.

The other graphic that brings this home shockingly to me is a table, sourced to Macquarie Bank, published in a Weekend Australian Review article by Rosemary Neill, showing in \$As comparative per capita funding of public broadcasters in 18 countries. Australia's place is No. 17 - second bottom, just below Portugal and just above Greece. Our public broadcaster's \$54 per capita figure is just above half the average which is \$99, and pathetically less than Austria's top place at just over \$180. To think, with the spread and complexity of servicing to our country, the ABC has hung on to at least some of its excellence!

To me, it is super urgent to make a significant increase in the ABC's funding, now.

Sincerely,

Helen Fenbury

Public Submissions
ABC Funding Adequacy and Efficiency Review
National Broadcasting Section
Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sirs

In response to the opportunity to make a Public Submission re the ABC Funding Adequacy and Efficiency Review; having been a listener to the ABC since childhood living in country Western Australia, when postwar it was the only truly reliable broadcasting service, in my experienced opinion, our ABC has always performed to the highest standards, on some occasions, with very limited resources.

The radio and television programs are stimulating to a variety of listeners/viewers of all ages and the entertainment factor is always of a high standard and presentation. Programs such as the Country Hour, Landline, Talk-back Radio, Regional News and local items of interest, religious views, country music, comedies, dramas, 24 hour broadcasting (welcomed by shift workers and insomniacs [such as myself]).

ABC announcers and TV presenters are recognised as being of the highest integrity and we are fortunate to have talented and intelligent people 'coming into our homes' via these media sources.

I urge within the structure of the Review, every favourable consideration be given to continuing the role of the ABC in Australian daily life.

Yours faithfully

Isabella R Moore

(typed for email transmission)

From: Ian & Enid Conochie

Sent: Thursday, 1 December 2005 4:32 AM

To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review

Subject: Submission on the ABC

We have been avid listeners to the ABC in all its forms since we were children – and we're now octogenarians. During those many decades, the ABC has always maintained excellent standards despite savage funding cuts by various federal governments. Such cuts have continually forced the ABC to be leaner and meaner with its productions so that, today, the ABC's financial support from the Federal Government is minimal in relation to our GDP. Over our life-times, we have seen a

continuous, bit by bit reduction of Australian-produced drama and music which are so important for our nation's culture.

One of our big disappointments was when the ABC shed its orchestras. And I (Ian) well remember the cuts made back in the 1950s when the ABC Choir in Perth – of which he was a member – was ditched along with ABC Choirs in other states. And as a one-time regular singer of Australian songs over 6WN, he regrets that today's young 'classically trained' singers are denied the same wonderful opportunities.

Not one of those past cost-cutting governments has ever gone to the polls with a stated policy of honing the ABC down to a skeleton. Instead, without any mandate, they have been systematically reducing what was once an important Australian cultural icon to a shadow of its former self.

Australia is a relatively affluent country so there is no reason for further reducing public funding of the ABC. In fact, there is every reason for the Australian Government to significantly increase such funding.

Enid & Ian Conochie

From: Joyce Hudson
Sent: Wednesday, 30 November 2005 1:16 AM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review
Subject: submission

I am one of those who watch a lot of ABC TV and listen to ABC radio. In spite of the limitation of funding in recent years, it still provides better programs, especially in current affairs, than commercial broadcasters. Please ensure that funding is adequate to keep the current programs going and to increase the production of creative programs.

Joyce Hudson

From: Jeff Rowohlt
Sent: Sunday, 27 November 2005 2:10 PM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review

We need the ABC to keep good Australian drama content. There should be more of it. If we didn't have the ABC we would be left to the mercy of the commercial stations that have rubbish reality TV.
Jeff Rowohlt

Dear Sir/Madam,

Herewith find below points that are, I believe, vitally important to the viewing public and should be included for consideration in any review of the national broadcaster's funding:

- Without an unaffordable, satellite dish many rural and regional viewers, like myself, have only two viewing options: the ABC and a 'dumbed-down' version of an already dumb member of the *big three* commercial channels.
- The ABC is our cultural lifesaver; we are utterly dependent on the national broadcaster for its un-sensationalised news broadcasts; its balanced, far-reaching and pertinent, un-trivialised current affairs.
- What is equally important to many of us is the quality of programmes which delight, inform, invigorate and add to our sense of wonder. None of which can be found on any commercial channel. The SBS could fulfil this role if it were accessible to us.
- Keeping the above in mind, we find, to our deep dismay, that our heart and mind life-blood is slowly ebbing away. Little by little, the wonderful, thought provoking dramas, documentaries, science and Australian produced programmes are becoming fewer and fewer. Country people cannot afford to do the 600km round trip to the city to see live quality drama, concerts or spectacles. For this we turn to the ABC.
- The ABC cannot continue to service the needs of country people with less money. On its already limited funds the National Broadcaster achieves far more of quality than its huge, commercially-funded so called 'rivals'. Their budgets are many times more than their cash-strapped cousin, yet they continue to broadcast appallingly made Australian programmes which occasionally pop up between their mainly American programmes. This we see when a visit to the city confirms our view of commercial television. They are perpetrating the 'americanisation' of the nation.
- It would seem to us that the ABC is remarkably efficient, much more so than the commercial channels; included of course when we speak of programmes is radio as well. We would certainly be overjoyed if we were able to listen to Radio National, but, living 10km out of town, that pleasure is denied to us because we are out of range of transmission.
- For the likes of us, who by demographic do not have the opportunities of our city counterparts the ABC means everything to us. What the national broadcaster needs, urgently, is MORE FUNDING, certainly not less. We know what the ABC is capable of from better funded days of yore. We look forward to the return of those halcyon days.

Sincerely and earnestly
Judith Walpole

From: Kamal Weeratunga
Sent: Thursday, 1 December 2005 12:27 AM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review
Subject: Submission for ABC Funding Adequacy and Efficiency Review

I have been a regular ABC viewer/listener/reader, since I migrated to Australia in 1997. I didn't know about the ABC (except Radio Australia), until I started living here. I quickly got sick of the commercial TV and gradually 'discovered' the ABC. The ABC is now an important part of my life, and it sustains my intellect. To me, the ABC is an iconic Australian cultural institute.

As a person with no particular political conviction, I treasure the ABC's editorial independence. I do not think that any other media institution in Australia (commercial or otherwise) provides the depth and breadth of program coverage provided by the ABC (except mainstream sports).

While I agree that the ABC should utilise it's limited funding for maximum efficiency to provide 'best value' for its listeners/viewers/readers (I think the ABC is already doing comparatively well in this regard), I believe it should not be starved of funding, stifling its creativity and freedom. I have noticed a decline in the ABC's local program content over the years, which can only be attributed to lack of funding.

I do not believe that there ought to be a direct correlation between the quality of programs and ratings. On the contrary, 'cheap' entertainment can often generate massive ratings. I believe that the Government has an obligation to preserve and sustain the ABC, which possibly cannot survive commercially, if it's to continue to maintain its quality and diversity of programs.

Kamal Weeratunga

From: Keren Witcombe
Sent: Tuesday, 29 November 2005 2:07 AM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review
Subject: public submission

To whom it may concern,

I cannot imagine life in Australia without the ABC. Radio National presents such a wide range of news, interviews, readings and programs about the arts, law, sport, religion, literature, politics, current affairs and life in general. The ABC News on line is far the best News service available. Channel 2 is the only channel still presenting quality current affairs programs and documentaries. It well documented that it is suffering from lack of funding to make quality Australian drama, which is a great shame and to the detriment of Australian culture.

I would not want to live in an Australia where further funding cuts and political pressure curtails this independent voice of Australians. To me, the ABC means equality, education, entertainment and democracy. I want an Australia where publically funded education, libraries and media give future young working class Australians the opportunities that I have had. Not an Australia where education is for the rich and the information is filtered by commercial interests and those of a foreign power. Long live the ABC!

Dr Keren Witcombe.

From: Kitech
Sent: Tuesday, 29 November 2005 11:20 AM
To: ABC-Review, ABC-Review
Subject: ABC Funding Adequacy and Efficiency Review

This Review of ABC funding is timely. The 'national broadcaster' plays a key role in informing and shaping our society. Ideally its creativity and independence allow Australian, as well as overseas listeners to include the world as part of their lives.

ABC independence is increasingly threatened by inadequate funding. Despite the government's current financial surplus, investigative reporting is restricted and programs are too frequently repeated, both simple though simplistic ways of coping with less income.

Sponsorship and advertising on the ABC are not solutions. Either option would entirely void the ABC's independence. Contentious issues linked to an ABC sponsor are unlikely ever to be discussed for fear of losing the Corporation's financial support.

To fulfil its Charter, the ABC must provide coverage not only of high quality but thorough and balanced. The Government should not dictate the spectrum of ABC views by controlling funding, any more than it should by directing which topics should - or should not - be investigated.

I ask you to recommend that the government support the ABC at a level that allows Australia to develop as a robust, confident and secure society.

With respect,

K.G.Johnson