

To: Chief of Staff **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friends of the ABC wants inquiry into the ABC

Friends of the ABC is outraged that the ABC is cutting its in-house production in favour of more outsourcing.

"We strongly support the call of the ABC staff-elected director (in exile) for a public inquiry into ABC outsourcing," said Glenys Stradijot, a spokesperson for Friends of the ABC (Vic). "An inquiry should be held as a matter of urgency."

"Cuts to the ABC's already meagre television arts programming are an abrogation of the broadcaster's charter responsibilities.

"The ABC was envisaged as a producer of programs of cultural value and intellectual integrity. Instead it is being transformed into a platform for carrying commercial content. This is privatisation by stealth.

"FABC regularly receives audience feedback that ABC TV programming has become too populist and less innovative - the entertainment less stimulating, and factual programming more lightweight.

"ABC television programming is becoming less distinctive than commercial offerings. Hardly surprising, given that programming produced externally for the ABC is also being made with sales to commercial broadcasters and overseas outlets in mind.

"The essence of the ABC is being destroyed, and the people who head the ABC are ultimately taking the public broadcaster to irrelevancy.

"If the ABC comes to be viewed as a platform for content provided by external commercial providers, governments won't consider that it warrants taxpayer support. The ABC won't attract the strong community defence it has in the past when under attack from governments which would prefer to see the public broadcaster downsized, if not entirely outsourced or commercialised.

"The ABC Board and Managing Director have ignored the wishes of the community. Late last year, Friends of the ABC presented to the ABC a petition signed by 10,425 members of the public which called on the public broadcaster to rebuild its production capacity to ensure it develops a range of high quality programs, and is no longer so dependent on outsourced production.

"Mr Scott and the ABC Board seem to have forgotten that they are caretakers of this great national institution which belongs to the people of Australia. They have no authority to commercialise it," said Glenys Stradijot.

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Further comment Glenys Stradijot, FABC (Vic) Campaign Manager
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