



Australian
Broadcasting
Corporation

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Dear Mr Baskerville,

Thank you for your letter to the Managing Director. Mr Scott has asked me to respond to you on his behalf and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

Firstly I would like to provide you with some background information that will give context for recently announced ABC programming decisions. These decisions have been made to reposition the ABC to allow us to meet current and future challenges and to maintain a clear focus on our audience strategy. The scope of these decisions has been necessitated by the Government's confirmation of a \$207 million cut to ABC funding, which comes on top of the \$120 million funding cut levied against the ABC in the May 2014 Budget.

In order to meet this reduction in funding, we must implement a reduced-cost operating model and continue to focus on efficiencies. We are conscious that we must do this while continuing to meet our Charter obligations and increasingly expansive audience expectations.

Our response to the Government's budget cut focuses on overheads and back office functions. We are reviewing our property holdings and extracting efficiencies from our procurement processes, our contracts with key suppliers and our infrastructure contracts. However, a cut of this magnitude has broader implications for the ABC; it will inevitably affect our content as we will no longer be able to apply efficiency savings to fund our audience strategy. The effect of these changes will include:

- Cessation of the Friday 7.30 state-based programs, with a more flexible and effective approach being used to deliver local current affairs to local audiences across the week;
- Closure of the ABC's Adelaide television production studio;
- Closure of our five smallest regional radio posts in Wagin (WA), Morwell (Vic), Gladstone (Qld), Port Augusta (SA) and Nowra (NSW);
- A revised television sports strategy focussing on national sporting events; and
- A reduction in the number of concerts recorded annually on Classic FM and adjustments to Radio National programming.

No area of the ABC is immune and as an outcome, over the next few months the ABC will lose approximately 400 dedicated and talented staff.

Turning to your specific concerns, ABC Radio advise that that history will remain a prominent feature of the network. The decommissioning of *Hindsight*, along with four other RN feature programs, is to make way for a new 30 minute prime time RN documentary feature slot to be broadcast from Monday to Thursday at 11am. This will provide a platform to showcase RN's core specialist programming in a more prominent position, to a larger and broader audience. ABC Radio also advise that *Rear Vision* is not affected by the changes happening within RN and the program will continue in 2015.

We acknowledge that the challenges ahead are great as we navigate our way through a rapidly evolving media environment with a real and significant cut to our budget. However, the ABC Board and management are committed to making the structural changes that are required to ensure that the ABC remains a relevant and vital institution for the Australian community.

I hope this information is of assistance. Thank you again for taking the time to write and for your support for the ABC.

Yours sincerely,



Denise Musto
A/Head, Audience and Consumer Affairs