

6/01/15

Dear Ms Wagner,

Thank you for your email, which has been forwarded to me for response.

The aim of recently announced proposals is to allow the ABC to meet current and future budgetary challenges and to maintain a focus on our Charter obligations and 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.

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 five of our smallest regional radio posts in Wagin, Morwell, Gladstone, Port Augusta and Nowra;
- 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 specifically to Radio National, one of the key changes is to combine five feature programs, including Poetica, into one overarching documentary 30 minute documentary strip which will be broadcast at the prime time of 11.00am, Monday to Thursday. I am advised that coverage of current specialist content will continue within this format, including poetry and literature.

While we understand these programming changes will disappoint some of our audience, we hope you understand the reasons for these decisions. Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin McAlinden  
Audience and Consumer Affairs