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Subject: ABC TV strategy Tasmania

Colleagues

Today, I have talked to TV and Resources staff in Hobart to outline changes to the commissioning of television content in Tasmania.

As I explained to all staff last year, ABC TV must constantly assess its production activity, paying heed to industry developments, changing audience tastes and the need to get the best out of its resources.

Against this background, the three-year television production strategy released late last year foreshadowed a review of program activity in Tasmania.

The Director of Television, Kim Dalton, and I have decided that a new approach is needed to commissioning; one that emulates the successful partnerships the ABC has put together with governments and their screen agencies in other states. A strategy that better enables the ABC to deliver on its Charter obligations to tell quality Australian stories across a range of genres. Some additional investment in News will also lead to increased national coverage from Tasmania.

This new strategy means that the internal TV production unit based in Hobart will close. Auction Room will not be recommissioned, nor will Collectors. Unfortunately this will mean 16 possible redundancies across Television and Resources in Tasmania, with the exact number known at the conclusion of staff consultations. Support staff are today assisting those affected by the decision.

I would like to acknowledge the creative output of the Tasmanian TV production team over many years and their strong efforts under challenging circumstances since 2010, including the uncertainty of the past 12 months.

The decision does not reflect on them or on the wider Tasmanian branch. The fact is that Tasmania does not have the scale and market to justify the high fixed costs involved in maintaining an internal television production unit and associated labour and infrastructure.

To replace it, the ABC is proposing to invest \$1.5 million over three years in a production fund and will seek a matching investment from the state government, most probably through Screen Tasmania.

This is similar to initiatives set up by the ABC in both SA and WA which have ensured continuity of local production in these states and resulted in programs such as *Who's Been Sleeping in My House*, *Vet School*, *Race to London* and *Croc College*.

Through this initiative, it is intended that the ABC will support Tasmanian production and provide a greater incentive for independent producers to pitch content across a range of genres – not just lifestyle programs.

Resourcing will be provided when necessary to ensure the ABC maintains its full Anzac Day coverage and for other key events like local Q&A programs and state election debates.

In regard to other states, the 2011-2013 production strategy remains in place. ABC TV remains committed to producing 75 per cent of its program hours internally.

In an associated move, ABC News will increase its Tasmanian-based resources and content. This includes creating a new reporter position to develop Tasmanian stories for *Landline*, and to support other news and current affairs programs.

The divisional managers will speak further with affected staff about these changes and anyone with queries or concerns is also encouraged to contact P&L.

Mark Scott