



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 10 November 1999

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (11.29 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the Parliament of Queensland calls on the ABC to reconsider its decision to withdraw the Carolyn Tucker program from the 8.30 a.m. to 9 a.m. timeslot Monday to Friday on 612 4QR. Parliament considers that the loss of this program would be a further blow to the democratic process in Queensland following the loss of the State-based 7.30 Report on ABC television.

Parliament affirms its belief that a democracy needs a strong media to disseminate information and encourage debate and the ABC is seen as having a charter to provide a full and unbiased news service."

I move that motion, which will be seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, and I would like to also incorporate in Hansard a copy of a letter to the ABC that the Leader of the Opposition and I have both signed. Mr Speaker, I seek your leave to do that so that it is on the record.

Leave granted.

November 10 1999

Lucy Broad
ABC Acting State General Manager
GPO Box 9994
BRISBANE 4001 QLD

Dear Ms Broad,

We wish to express our deep concern at reports that the ABC plans to change the format of programming on 612 4QR.

We understand there are plans to remove the flagship local current affairs program, broadcasting between 8.30 am and 9 am on Monday to Friday, and extend the breakfast show.

The program presented by Carolyn Tucker is an agenda-setter and an important vehicle for providing information on and scrutiny of Government decisions.

The loss of this program would be a further blow to the democratic process in Queensland, following the loss of the State-based 7.30 Report on ABC television.

A democracy needs a strong media to disseminate information and encourage debate, and the ABC is seen as having a charter to provide a full and unbiased news service.

We urge you to re-consider any decision to axe the radio current affairs program in the interests of democracy and informed public debate in Queensland.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) P Beattie
Hon. Peter Beattie MLA
PREMIER

(sgd) Robert Borbidge
Hon. Rob Borbidge MLA
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr BEATTIE: I think that this is a matter of some importance. I have no intention of delaying the issues before the House. The Leader of the Opposition and I have agreed on a time frame in which to hold this limited debate.

This motion is about providing access not only in terms of the Government to explain its policies but for the Opposition to make the Government accountable. If we look at what has happened in the media—and I have been in public life for well over 20 years—the media outlets for public debate are, in fact, shrinking, and they have been for some time. Too frequently, we get a focus of the major networks—and I am talking about ABC now— as being too Sydney/Melbourne oriented. However, this is the most decentralised State in Australia.

This motion is not just about being accountable in a democracy, it is also about being accountable throughout the State. Because we are the most decentralised State, we have people the length and breadth of Queensland and in the bush. They are entitled to know. The bush has demonstrated across Australia that it has had some concern about all the major political parties. I think that, in a time like this, they are entitled to hear the issues debated by both sides of politics.

This is a bipartisan approach. It is a non-political approach. It is saying to the ABC that we believe that it is important that there be public debate and that the democratic process be accountable.
