

From: Ian Mannix
Sent: Monday, 18 March 2013 12:53 PM
To: DG-Users All Staff
Subject: Staff elected director must be truly independent - Ian Mannix

Dear colleague

Voting starts this week and I urge you to vote, as a number of principles which are important for all ABC staff are at stake.

But before I tell you about how I'd like to help guide board decisions that affect us all – for instance, the thinking behind why the two new News “fact checking unit” positions are both to be based in Sydney – I'd like you to think about why candidate Matt Peacock would put at risk the perception of absolute independence on the part of the ABC staff representative.

Matt is campaigning with the endorsement of the Community and Public Sector Union. The union is a special interest group – like any other lobby group – and this endorsement means Matt will represent the interests of the CPSU at board, not necessarily yours. Why else would they endorse him? The appointment of representatives of special interest groups to boards is something many of us have criticised over the years. Don't let it happen at the ABC. Independence goes to the heart of what the ABC stands for.

A candidate with a campaign manager who makes national tours of offices – and talks about making “demands” of the board – will sit uncomfortably with many. It raises the prospect of union-funded campaigns in the future. Not all of us can afford such extravagant campaigning.

I believe that a board member should make no more “demands” on the board other than that it meet its budgetary and other governance obligations, and – importantly - to help set the direction and culture of the ABC. Demands have no place in that environment.

I admire Matt's work, and his resolve and enthusiasm, but I genuinely believe if he is elected as a representative of the CPSU, the office of the staff elected director will be diminished.

I believe the Presidential campaign style is out of place for this position, and I hope that a debate of ideas will be sufficient to elect a representative who will listen to staff, regardless of their political or union affiliations, and represent their interests fairly and strongly to the Board. That's the ABC I believe in.

I urge you to make a stand for genuine independence and to support the notion of independence within the ABC at every level, from the newsroom floor to the Board, and beyond.

In terms of my own platform, I am pleased to see that some other candidates believe the ABC needs to give stronger consideration to the role of staff in regional areas, and I hope to extend that greater consideration to the role the ABC can play in helping Australians, wherever they live, to express themselves on air through ABC TV and Radio, and online. I acknowledge this will be a costly exercise, and that we need to consider ways of budgeting to enable this to happen.

Finally, and so importantly, consider the ramifications of your vote. Do you want an independent representative, a person willing to speak their mind, or a seat at the table for the CPSU?

Voting is “optional preferential,” which means you can either tick a box with “1” or tick any number of candidates, starting with “1.” Please maximise the impact of your vote by including your preferences.

I’ll look forward to discussing these and any other matters with you on Yammer or by email at any time.

Ian Mannix



Ian Mannix
Manager Emergency Broadcasting, Regional Property and Community
Development
ABC Local Radio