

# ABC Golden Period

## 1970s to 1990s

I like to refer to the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s as the Golden Era of the ABC Broadcasting Corporation because it was a period when the National Broadcaster presented quality programmes that viewers really wanted to see and, by and large, very much enjoy. It was also a period where it was an exciting and invigorating arena in which to work. It therefore attracted a large number of people whose talent could be developed in a creative and/or managerial way to provide a large variety of programming catering for a wide audience.

I joined the ABC in 1972 as a temporary employee in the film editing postproduction area, filling in for someone on annual leave. The first programme I worked on was The Auntie Jack show, somewhat confronting for a recently arrived £ 10 Pom. Fortunately, I seemed to satisfy the department head who hired me and was offered a permanent position after a few weeks. It was an interesting time in another way too. Shortly after I joined the ABC they started training and employing female film editors, somewhat of a first for the industry in Australia. This certainly was not the case in Canada where I had spent the previous 6 years working.

In those days the ABC had enough money to produce all programmes internally and broke these down into approximately 5 different genres:

- TV Features
- TV Drama
- Comedy
- Education
- News & Current Affairs

The organisation was regarded as a very good training ground in several areas and produced many very talented performers both in production areas as well as in management. In fact, quite a few members of the production staff were snapped up by Hollywood and some cinematographers and editors went on to win Academy Awards.

Those in management, especially department heads, were well appointed and in many instances had worked and been trained within the ABC. I will refer to this in some detail on the day.

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Sadly, today, with a huge cut in funds, the ABC can no longer afford to produce all its programming internally and must either buy products to broadcast or commission shows to be produced externally. This has resulted in a decline in programme and technical quality and the ABC is no longer seen as a place to receive much in the way of creative training. As a consequence, it probably doesn't attract the kind of personnel it did back in the Golden Era.

I propose to cover all the above topics in some detail. I will also talk about several people who I had the privilege of knowing and who I believe have contributed to National Broadcasting in a big and significant way.