

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications
Committee
Datganoli Darlledu / Devolution of Broadcasting
CWLC DoB15
Ymateb gan Unigolyn / Response from an Individual

I have lived in Wales since 2008. Before that I lived most of my life in New Zealand and Australia, so I have experienced broadcasting in different formats and under different jurisdictions.

What I observe in Wales is that unless people go out of their way to seek out news or viewpoints that reflect life here, they are fed a constant stream of England- and particularly London-centric information. Time and time again I've had to explain to friends living in the Valleys that when the newspapers they read, or the TV news they listen to, talk about changes to education or health, that those changes are NOT happening in Wales. They just listen to the news or read the London-based newspapers and don't take a moment to think about whether it is relevant to them or not. This has a negative effect on our democracy.

When you look at the difference between Wales and Scotland, where they have national newspapers giving the Scottish viewpoint on events, I can see that more needs to be done to make sure that people here can look at things from a Welsh perspective and realise what is relevant to them and what is not.

To me it's important that we develop our own unique identity, that we stand up for our own way of life and our unique way of seeing and doing things, and without controlling our own media we are not able to do that. We are letting the opinions of a more powerful neighbour ride roughshod over our own, and I think it's time we put a stop to it.

It's probably too late to develop a truly representative, national newspaper, that gives not just local news but a Welsh slant on international affairs, as fewer and fewer people actually read the print media these days, but we can do something about broadcasting. People still watch TV and are influenced by what they see. We need that to reflect what is reality in Wales, and we can't do that without devolved public broadcasting.

S4C produces some worldclass, excellent dramas but they are tucked away on a channel that many non-Welsh speakers dismiss as 'not for me'. We need to move these into the mainstream, with subtitles or even English versions (as some series have done) and make them more accessible to a range of viewers as something normal, not for a niche group.

We also need the power to sell our TV programmes far and wide across the world. When I lived in Australia there was a multicultural, multilingual TV channel - SBS - and I could see many of our Welsh programmes becoming very popular there. There must be others around the world, and this would be a great way to promote Wales as a country in its own right, not just a region of England which so many foreigners think. Without devolved broadcasting I can't imagine that the UK-wide agencies would bother too much about promoting our brilliant Welsh programmes.

I know there aren't many facts in this email, but I feel very strongly about it and wanted to make my viewpoint known.

Kind regards,

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Deborah McCarney

