

Question on notice For Southern Cross Austereo:

Your submission to Joint Select Committee on Broadcasting Legislation stated that the ever expanding availability of very high speed broadband into Australian households will provide metropolitan networks the ability to deliver programs direct to regional viewers thereby bypassing regional television stations completely.

When do you envisage that this will be possible? The current phone and broadband services that exist in some regional and rural areas will not deliver this at the present time. Until the time that the broadband services have improved to a standard that will allow it, where do you propose regional people source their local news?

Is this the comprehensive response to the issues raised in the Finkelstein Report and Convergence Review that you expected?

The department told the Joint Select Committee on Broadcasting Legislation yesterday that it canvassed the Bills with television networks in November 2012. Was that the case then? Is it still the case now?

If regional news services were diminished, how many jobs- both journalistic and production based, would go?

Answers

The submission to the Committee by Southern Cross Austereo was, like the Convergence Review, looking ahead to the situation which will occur when high speed broadband is available to all Australians.

However, availability of video news services and other programs does not necessarily rely on access to the National Broadband Network. Video news programs are delivered now to mobile devices such as phones and iPads wherever 3G mobile reception is available. Also, receipt of a television broadcast quality video feed to a television set or monitor requires internet speeds of about 2 Mbps (megabits per second) - whereas the NBN is promising speeds of 100 Mbps - which can be provided by a range of technologies, not just high speed broadband, including ADSL and 4G mobile services.

Finally, Southern Cross Austereo does not advocate a reduction in the existing content rules which apply to regional television services. Those rules would continue to apply if the 75% population reach rule is removed.

Southern Cross Austereo was not aware of the Government's media law package until the package was publicly announced.

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