

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 51

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Written, 27/5/2015

Topic: Redundancy Process

Senator McGrath, James asked:

1. How many staff have been made redundant at the ABC since December 2014?
2. How much has the ABC spent to date on redundancy payments?
3. Which areas or sections of the ABC have borne the majority of redundancies to date?
4. Has the redundancy process led to a reduction in duplication of services? If so, what are some examples?
5. What proportion of the redundancies to date have been involuntary?
6. How many journalists have been made redundant since December 2014?
7. Is the redundancy process still ongoing? If so, when will it be completed?
8. Is the ABC aware of any future industrial action by unions?
9. How many staff have been made redundant from Radio National to date?
10. How many individual programmes have been or are being removed from Radio National?
 - a) What are they?
11. Have any staff been made redundant from the Four Corners programme since December 2014?
 - a. If so, what was the reasons for this?

Answer:

1. Since 1 December 2014 a total of 238 employees have left the ABC as a result of redundancy. (*data as at 16 June 2015*).
2. Redundancy payments for this period total \$25,741,389.
3. To date, the four divisions that have borne the highest number of redundancies to date are News (82), Radio (58), Television (47) and Business Services (24). Geographically the most significant reductions have occurred in NSW (113), Victoria (43), South Australia (24) and Western Australia (22).
4. The ABC has implemented a number of initiatives to minimise costs and reduce the duplication of services. These include:
 - Centralising switchboard services in Sydney

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

- Reviewing mailroom services around the country and implementing a pigeon hole service in capital city sites; Merging Executive payroll with the main staff payroll in Adelaide.
5. The ABC does not distinguish between voluntary and involuntary redundancies. Under the terms of the *ABC Enterprise Agreement 2013 – 2016*, when an employee is notified that they are potentially redundant, they can elect to explore redeployment or accept immediate retrenchment and are given seven days to make the choice. If they elect to explore redeployment, that process runs for six weeks. Of the 238 employees made redundant since December 2014, 215 opted for immediate retrenchment and 23 opted to explore redeployment.
 6. Since December 2014 a total of 45 journalists have been made redundant.
 7. The redundancy process is still ongoing. It is anticipated that redundancies related to the 2014 budget cut will be completed in 2017.
 8. The ABC is not aware of any future industrial action.
 9. From November 2014 to date, 21 Radio National staff have been identified as potentially redundant. Of those, 17 accepted redundancies and 4 have been transferred or redeployed to other roles within the ABC.
 10. Following the budget cuts in November 2014, Radio National has removed ten programs from broadcast, but taken the opportunity to examine how it can most efficiently use its resources to provide audiences with a unique content offer.
 - *By Design* and *First Bite* have been replaced by a two hour program -*Blueprint for Living* - which includes program segments on architecture and food.
 - Radio National's discrete topical features programs *360*, *Hindsight*, *Into the Music*, *Poetica* and *Encounter* have been recast and merged into a daily, half hour anthology documentary program called *Earshot*, on air from Monday to Thursday at 11am.
 - *Bush Telegraph* was decommissioned, but Radio National are working to incorporate national issues affecting rural and regional communities into a range of programming, rather than a discrete rural program.
 - *Sound Quality* and *The Quiet Space* have been also been decommissioned, and *Jazztrack* hosted by Mal Stanley has moved from Classic FM to Radio National, on air Saturday and Sunday at 5.00 pm.
 11. No *Four Corners* staff have been made redundant since December 2014.