

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Question No: 258**

**Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Boards**

**Senator Ludwig asked:**

Since 7 September 2013;

1. How often has each Board met, break down by Board name;
2. What travel expenses are provided;
3. What is the average attendance at Board meetings;
4. How does the board deal with conflict of interest;
5. What conflicts of interest have been registered;
6. What remuneration is provided to board members;
7. How does the board dismiss board members who do not meet attendance standards?
8. Have any requests been made to ministers to dismiss board members since 7 September 2013?
9. Please list board members who have attended less than 51% of meetings?
10. What have catering costs been for the board meetings held this year; is alcohol served?

**Answer:**

1. From 1 September 2013 to the Additional Estimates hearing in February 2014, the ABC Board met on three occasions – 10 October 2013, 5 December 2013 and 20 February 2014.
2. The ABC pays for the travel costs associated with each Director's attendance at an ABC Board meeting, being flights and accommodation (for Directors travelling from interstate) and taxis. Travel Allowance is paid in accordance with the *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2013/16 Official Travel by Office Holders*.
3. There is full attendance at the majority of Board meetings. Details of attendance at Board meetings are reported in full in the ABC Annual Report.
4. The ABC Board has adopted a Board Protocol, which sets out Directors' rights and responsibilities including dealing with conflicts of interest. The ABC Board Protocol is publicly available on the ABC's website. Directors are expected to meet their statutory obligation to disclose any material personal interest in accordance with s27F of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*.
5. A register of Declarations of Interests is maintained. A number of interests were declared and registered at meetings held between 7 September 2013 and 25 February 2014. No conflicts of interest were registered.
6. Remuneration is set by the Remuneration Tribunal. The rate for the Chairman as at 25 February 2014 was \$164,600 per annum, paid on a monthly basis. The rate for a Director as at 25 February 2014 was \$54,180 per annum, paid on a monthly basis. Both rates were set in July 2013 (Determination 2013/11).

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7. A persistent failure by a Director to attend Board meetings would be managed by the Board on a case-by-case basis. Section 18 of the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* provides for removal of a Director from office by the Governor-General if a Director is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board without the leave of the Chairman or acting Chairman.
8. No.
9. Of the two meetings held between 7 September 2013 and 25 February 2014, two directors attended only one of those meetings (less than 51% of meetings during the period). Professor Fiona Stanley had been granted a leave of absence by the Chairman for the 10 October 2013 meeting. Mr Simon Mordant was unable to attend the 10 October 2013 meeting. During 2013, no Board members attended less than 51% of meetings that they were eligible to attend.
10. \$4,112.60. Alcohol was offered during lunch at the end-of-year Board meeting (5 December 2013).