

ABC RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TALKEN ON NOTICE IN HEARINGS 7-8 MARCH 2016.

Q. ABC expenditure on digital services.

It is impossible to quantify a discreet digital spend as all ABC services are now carried digitally.

Q. ABC staff numbers

As at 7 March 2016, the ABC employed 4186 FTEs.

Q. Why has ABC reduced live broadcasts of opera, ballet and music concerts?

The reduction in certain content is due to cost, audience trends and a reduction in internal production capacity. ABC Classic FM broadcasts 295 recordings a year.

Q. Regional marketing expenditure

The ABC Regional Budget for Promotions, for 2015/16 is \$110,000.

Q. Board members from a non-Anglo background.

The ABC notes that all Board members bar the Managing Director, are appointed by government. The Chairman, Jim Spigelman AC QC, was born in Poland. The incoming ABC Managing Director, Michelle Guthrie is of Chinese- Australian heritage.

Q. The charter and executive management

Section 10 of the ABC Act vests management of the ABC in the Managing Director. The section states:

“(1) The affairs of the Corporation shall, subject to subsection (2), be managed by the Managing Director. (2) The Managing Director shall, in managing any of the affairs of the Corporation and in exercising any powers conferred on him or her by this Act, act in accordance with any policies determined, and any directions given to him or her, by the Board. (3) All acts and things done in the name of, or on behalf of, the Corporation by the Managing Director shall be taken to have been done by the Corporation.”

Q. Mobile-only consumers in rural and regional Australia

According to the 2015 Regional Telecommunications Review, the proportion of exclusively mobile users, defined as adult Australians without a fixed-line phone or fixed internet connection and who use mobile connection for voice, messaging and internet access at home, is 50 per cent higher in regional areas than in capital cities (15% compared to 10%). It also found that the proportion of mobile-only internet users is higher in regional areas than in capital cities (26% to 19%).

Q. Digital platforms that rural and regional Australians are using to access ABC services

Audiences access the ABC via mobile and desktop sites, apps and social media. These include ABC News, ABC Radio, ABC TV and ABC Rural sites as well as ABC Regional's own ABC Local sites, ABC Open, and Heywire. Regional video content is also available on demand via iview. ABC Regional does not have the analytics capability to clearly identify where our audience is located, either metro or regional/rural.

However, we can extract figures showing increased appetite for 'regional' content, especially via mobile devices. Content output for regionally located ABC stations has increased by 46% over two years. In July 2015, the ABC also launched streaming audio services for 16 regional Local Radio stations, which have already accumulated over 1.5 million plays and almost 780,000 visits.

Q. Output of multiplatform journalists

The ABC is in the process of moving to a new web content management system, which will enable the extraction of detailed output reporting within regions and across regional Australia.

Q. Growth in social media audiences and digital output.

The following sites have shown rapid audience growth in the 12 months to the end of February 2016:

- Country Hour NSW Facebook – More than 5.9 million visits, a 734% increase
- Rural Facebook - 14.3 million visits, an increase of 528%
- Landline Facebook – More than 8 million visits, an increase of 283%
- ABC Open Facebook - 10.4 million visits, an increase of 53%