

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

submission to

**Senate Environment and Communications  
References Committee**

**The ABC's commitment to reflecting and  
representing regional diversity**

January 2013



# **ABC submission to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry into the Corporation's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity**

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## **Introduction**

The ABC welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry into the Corporation's commitment to regional diversity. The ABC is fully appreciative of its responsibilities and audience expectations in this area. Over many decades, the Corporation has provided services for, from and about the nation's many regional communities. No other media organisation has made the investment and demonstrated the commitment to telling stories that are relevant to communities beyond the main population centres. The presence has been constant – even if the nature of the ABC's contribution has evolved over the years, influenced by economics, technology and changing audience tastes. The Corporation views its work in regional communities as integral to meeting its Charter obligation to “reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community”.<sup>1</sup>

The inquiry takes place at a time of major change in the Australian media landscape. Convergence has undermined commercial business models, making it harder to service small, far-flung markets. In regional areas, there has been a diminution in content diversity, a loss of localism in services and a loss of jobs. This has been evident across radio, television and print. The ABC contends that its commitment to regionalism becomes even more important in this era of instability in the media. But in a convergent world, the ABC's performance and efficiency must be measured across all its platforms, and not viewed through the prism of one. This is well-understood by ABC audiences. The latest independent Newspoll shows that 86% value the ABC and its services to the community.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 (Cth)*, s.6(1)(a)(i).

<sup>2</sup> Newspoll, *ABC Appreciation Survey 2012*

The ABC notes recent commentary in relation to the allocation of some of its television production resources. It welcomes the opportunity this inquiry provides to inform the Senate Committee about its regional programming and issues of resource allocation.

## **The ABC's commitment to regional Australia**

The Inquiry's first term of reference addresses the nature and extent of the ABC's commitment to local communities and local content. This submission will illustrate the ways in which the ABC is fully meeting its Charter obligations to provide services which reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community.

In order to properly assess the ABC's commitment to regional audiences, it is necessary to consider the context in which the Corporation provides its services. The Committee should also consider the range of local, regional and national services offered by the ABC across its various platforms. Over the last two decades a number of inter-related pressures have reshaped the Corporation, the services it offers and audience expectations. Technological developments have transformed consumer expectations and there is now a massive choice of platforms, devices and technologies. Notwithstanding an increase in the 2009 triennium, during this time the ABC has experienced a 23% decline in funding (in real terms, since 1985–86) and has seen its workforce decline from over 6,500 in 1997 to 4,603 in 2011–12. Increased competition for content arising from the expansion of digital free-to-air multi-channels has also led to rising content acquisition costs.

The ABC's response to these pressures has been to transform itself into an innovative, audience-focussed media organisation, expanding its services and delivering them across multiple platforms, including analog and digital television and radio, online, on mobile phones and via social media. The ABC also encourages its audiences to become content-creators, integrating user-generated content into its suite of services, thereby enriching audiences' content experiences.

As the table overleaf demonstrates, the ABC is delivering substantially more services to the public at a lower real cost than it was 20 years ago.

*Transformation at the ABC*

	1990-91	2011-12
<b>Real funding</b> (excl transmission)	\$851.4 million <sup>3</sup>	\$806.4 million
<b>Staffing</b>	6,066 FTEs	4,603 FTEs
<b>Television</b>	1 analog channel	1 analog channel ABC1 (digital) ABC2/ ABC4Kids (digital) ABC3 (digital) ABC News 24 (digital) iview (online catch-up)
<b>Radio</b>	Metropolitan and Regional Radio (55 locations) Radio National (90% of population) ABC-FM (90% of population) Triple J (9 cities only)	ABC Local (60 locations)  Radio National (nationwide)*  ABC Classic FM (nationwide)* triple j (nationwide)* ABC NewsRadio (nationwide)* ABC Dig Music (digital, 6 cities)* ABC Jazz (digital, 6 cities)* ABC Country (digital, 6 cities)* triple j Unearthed (digital, 6 cities)* Podcasting
<b>Online</b>	—	ABC Online (5 million+ pages) ABC Open
<b>Mobile</b>	—	Over 25 apps (iOS and Android)
<b>News</b>	17 overseas bureaux	12 overseas bureaux
<b>International</b>	Radio Australia	Radio Australia Australia Network International websites

*\* Denotes services also streamed online.*

As set out in further detail below, the ABC provides a range of programs and services that reflect regional Australia and meet the needs of rural and regional communities in a variety of ways. This includes services that are produced in and for specific regional communities across the country and offer localised coverage of news, events, issues, personalities and emergencies. Similarly, a number of the Corporation's state-based and national services specifically or regularly cover regional issues and reflect rural and regional areas to the nation—or, in the case of most online services, the world. In addition, the ABC offers a unique online environment in which regional and rural communities can connect, learn and contribute. The Corporation also participates in and covers a wide range of events that have regional relevance and impact. In 2011-12, the ABC invested \$25 million in television

<sup>3</sup> Indexed to 2011-12

production budgets outside NSW and Victoria and in 2012–13 will invest approximately \$38 million on regional multi-platform production (not including news). The ABC also marks itself apart from other media organisations in its commitment to ensuring that audiences in regional areas have access to the same or similar services as are available in metro areas.

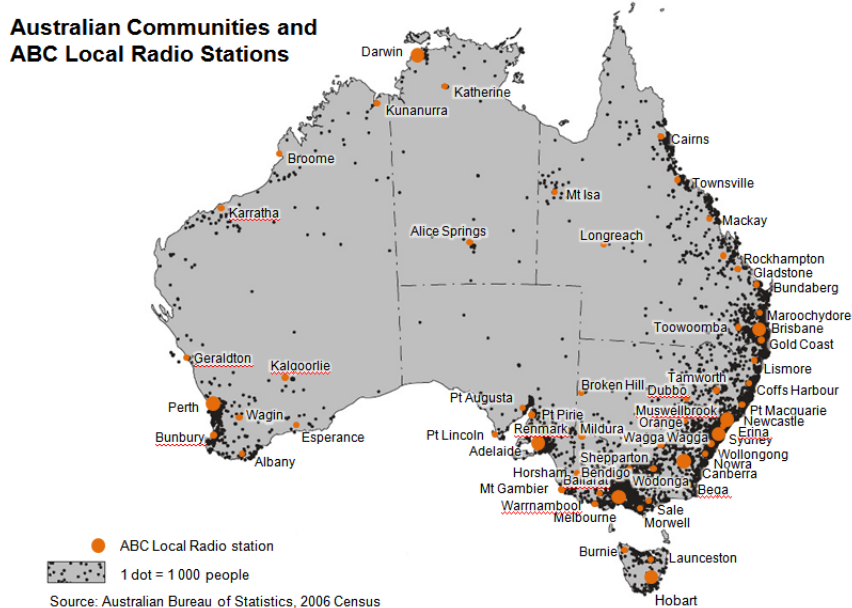
This continued commitment comes at a time when commercial services funded by advertising are facing difficult market conditions, resulting in greater syndication, job losses and less locally relevant material. The economics of regional commercial media services are inherently difficult, given the small markets and resulting very small pool of advertising revenue. This was recently recognised by the Government's Convergence Review.<sup>4</sup>

In its most recent report of broadcasters' financial results, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) reported that 41 commercial regional radio stations made a loss and that the average profit on regional AM licenses was only \$110,000.<sup>5</sup> In 2007, the ACMA estimated that the cost of complying with the local news requirements for regional radio could reach 15–26% of profit.<sup>6</sup> Regional television operators have also stated that the local content provisions applying to them represent an "onerous burden".<sup>7</sup>

This context only serves to highlight the importance of the ABC's local and regional services and the valuable role they play in communities across the country.

### *Regional centres and ABC Local Radio*

The ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity is perhaps most significantly embodied in the offices that the Corporation has in 51 regional locations across Australia.



<sup>4</sup> Convergence Review, *Discussion Paper: Australian and Local Content*, p 23

<sup>5</sup> ACMA, *Broadcasting Financial Results report* for 2008-09

<sup>6</sup> ACMA, *Local Content Level Investigation Report*, 2007

<sup>7</sup> Prime Television, *Submission Re: Local Content Licence Content for Regional Commercial Television Broadcasters*, September 2007

Built around the ABC's regional Local Radio stations, these offices are fully-fledged multimedia centres that provide their local audiences with news, information, and specialist rural coverage from their community each day, as well as emergency coverage as required. The centres gather, produce and distribute content from each region in different formats and for multiple platforms—radio, online, television and mobile phones—and distribution to local, national and global audiences. This multiplatform approach significantly increases the focus and reflection of Australia's regional diversity to wider audiences.

Each region is represented through an ABC Local website showcasing content from the local radio station and broader content from and about the community. Each such website contains rich-media content, including an increasing number of podcasts and capacity for audiences to interact, collaborate and contribute their own content. Event diaries enable communities to list their own events and activities.

ABC Local websites enhance the ability of audiences to connect and interact with their community, their local ABC station and with other communities. They build on the strong relationships already established with local communities through increased interactivity and act both as a gateway to other regions and communities, and to coverage and content from across ABC Online. Special features focus on the events, places and people that make each region unique.

New forms of social and interactive media enable ABC Radio to engage and collaborate with audiences. This interaction occurs through Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media and provides greater opportunity for audiences to express their views and generate their own content on ABC and ABC-related third party sites.

ABC Radio has around 270 FTEs (full-time equivalents) based in regional and rural Australia.

Local Radio is the primary analog outlet for radio sports coverage through *ABC Grandstand* which has increased its coverage of regional sport in Australia significantly, on radio and online, through dedicated cross media sports reporters in Townsville, Wagga Wagga and Ballarat. The coverage is also available on ABC Grandstand digital radio, which is also streamed online.

### *ABC Open*

The ABC Open project was launched in 2010 to engage regional audiences in participatory media, to help bridge the “digital divide” currently experienced by many Australians living outside capital cities, to provide regional employment and ensure that local and regional stories are both told in innovative and compelling ways and brought to mainstream audiences.

ABC Open has enhanced the broadband content capability of the ABC's 51 regional radio stations, helping them evolve into ABC regional multimedia centres and providing a focal point for regional communities who want to share their experiences online, on radio and on TV.

Since its launch in September 2010, ABC Open's milestones include:<sup>8</sup>

- Recruitment of 50 ABC Open producers
- Approximately 40 ABC Open national and regional multimedia projects
- More than 25,500 contributions from community groups, organisations and individuals in the regions, including music videos, to short films, to audio slideshows, to guest blogs and digital photographs
- Just over 3,600 workshops teaching basic digital literacy to more than 8,900 participants in regional communities across the country.

A distinctive feature of ABC Open is that it provides content for broad distribution across the ABC and beyond, to bring the stories created by regional Australians to as wide an audience as possible. The collection point for all stories is the ABC Open website, but content features across a range of other ABC and 3rd party platforms.

ABC Open content has featured on ABC Local Radio and ABC Local online, Radio National (online and radio), triple j (online and triple j Unearthed digital), ABC Digital radio, ABC Classic FM (online), ABC Grandstand (online), Australia Network, ABC News Online and the Indigenous, Environment, Science and Arts portals, the Disability portal Ramp Up and ABC TV's *Behind the News*, *Q & A* and 7.30.

Since April 2012, ABC Open has produced a weekly 13 minute program on ABC News 24 broadcast twice on Friday evenings. These shows are then available for 4 weeks on iView and then on the ABC Open Vimeo channel. Additionally, nearly 300 individual stories have been broadcast as part of twice daily ABC News 24 interstitials since September 2011. Stories have also featured on the ABC News 24 *Weekend Breakfast* program.

In addition, ABC Open has held over 320 events, exhibitions and screenings across Australia to a combined estimated audience of over 72,000 people, including at the Queensland Museum, Queensland Library, Adelaide Exhibition Centre, WA Museum, and ABC Hobart and over 30 smaller regional exhibitions held around Australia in such community meeting points as libraries, Council Chambers, universities, schools and community centres.

### *News coverage*

The ABC employs a comprehensive network of regional reporters around Australia, offering unparalleled, specialist coverage of local news and information. In an environment in which audiences can now access a world of information and a truly global perspective, it becomes more important than ever to maintain the ability to investigate and report at a local level.

The ABC has a total of 88 reporters working in 48 regional newsrooms (see Appendix 1).

Apart from providing television, radio and online content for a range of national and state based news services, these reporters also provide regional radio bulletins serving the needs of local audiences.

Overall, the ABC provides more than 3,400 hours of regional radio news bulletins across Australia each year. Journalists in regional stations provide morning, lunchtime and afternoon

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<sup>8</sup> As at 19 December 2012

bulletins focused on their local communities. These are usually at 6.30 am, 7.30 am, 8.30am, 12.30 pm and 5.30 pm. Durations vary between three and five minutes each with most centres also providing headlines. These bulletins are also complemented by comprehensive online news services, with users able to customise the ABC news online page according to their location.

Regional reporters in the larger bureaux also contribute television news content from time to time to both state and national news programming.

At a higher level, the ABC maintains fully staffed and equipped local newsrooms in every state and territory capital city, providing a full suite of local radio news bulletins, local online news information, a local 7pm news bulletin and a weekly dedicated state-based current affairs program.

The ABC also produces key national programming and content outside of Sydney to ensure a broad balance around the country. Examples of key programming and output produced outside Sydney and Melbourne are:

- News Online, which is based in Brisbane
- *Landline*, the Corporation's national rural and regional program, which is produced out of Brisbane
- *Australian Story*, which is based in Brisbane
- *Behind the News* and *News on 3*, from the children's news unit, which is based in Adelaide.

The ABC's ongoing commitment to providing regional audiences with high-quality, highly local news and information is unique in the Australian media environment.

### *Emergencies*

The ABC functions as Australia's emergency broadcaster and in fulfilling this role, the Corporation has developed strong partnerships with emergency services organisations across regional areas.

The ABC uses its radio, television and online services to deliver timely, accurate and relevant information to affected communities during fires, floods and other natural disasters and emergencies. This is supported by agreements with all state and territory emergency services.

ABC Local Radio acts as a vital link to communities—most frequently regional communities—before, during and after emergencies. Through the Local Radio network, ABC Local websites and the ABC Emergency portal, warnings and essential information are distributed quickly to affected communities and coverage provided to the broader community.

During the recent Tasmanian and NSW bushfires and during the Queensland floods in 2011, for example, ABC Local sites provided live streaming of emergency broadcasts. These sites featured photos and stories contributed by ABC staff and the audience. ABC Local also provided regular emergency updates on social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, and web-based map containing both verified and audience-sourced information on road closures, evacuation centres and support services.

During the Queensland floods, the ABC also established a temporary digital radio station, to broadcast ABC South East Queensland's emergency coverage to digital radio audiences



across Australia. Continuous flood updates were also provided nationally on ABC NewsRadio (analog, digital and streamed online) with the full spectrum of ABC Radio and other ABC services cross-promoting essential detail.

The multiplatform environment has enabled global audiences to share the experiences of those affected by emergencies.

The community trusts and relies on ABC emergency broadcasting services and this reflects the very high level of commitment the Corporation has to serving regional communities.

### *Heywire*

An initiative of ABC Radio, in partnership with the Australian Government, for the last 15 years, Heywire has provided rural youth with a safe space to share stories and debate and share the ideas of young people from rural and regional Australia.

Heywire is a competition open to people aged between 16 and 22 years who live outside Australia's major cities. They are invited to submit stories in text, audio, video or photo format about life in their locality. Winners are chosen by the ABC's regional stations around Australia and they work with ABC staff to produce a story to be featured on ABC platforms. Heywire materials are distributed to all secondary schools and tertiary institutions in regional Australia and the competition is promoted across the ABC.

Heywire holds a Regional Youth Summit in Canberra each February at which it brings together the winners for leadership training and community building activities. Participants develop project proposals aimed at improving life for young people in regional Australia. These ideas are presented to an audience of Government representatives and youth sector leaders, and submitted in a report to Government.

Since its inception, there have been 8,000 stories submitted to Heywire.

A particular focus of the program has been to include young Indigenous participants, who have personally benefitted and returned to their communities with ideas and confidence to work on them.

Heywire has progressed from an annual initiative to an ongoing online and social media space for young people to interact with each other and share their stories and opinions.

Heywire underscores the ABC's commitment to all facets of regional and rural Australia.

### *triple j Unearthed and One Night Stand*

Unearthed is triple j's award-winning initiative for discovering and sharing new Australian music. Established in 1995, triple j Unearthed has successfully established careers for thousands of musicians nationwide and internationally.

triple j Unearthed provides national exposure for unsigned artists, including those from regional Australia. Regional bands, such as Killing Heidi, have achieved national success from their initial exposure through Unearthed (<http://www.triplejuneearthed.com>).

In October 2011, triple j Unearthed was launched as a digital-only radio station. It can also be heard online in regional Australia – more than 30% of all music on Unearthed is made outside of the capital cities.

triple j's annual One Night Stand concert takes Australian acts to regional areas where bands and festivals would rarely tour for a free, all ages, drug and alcohol-free event. These

concerts attract between 10,000 and 15,000 fans. In choosing the One Night Stand town each year, triple j considers where the event might make the most impact, and looks especially towards regions dealing with problems such as high youth unemployment, drought and high suicide rates.

triple j reports from the town, covering stories and issues relevant to the region's young people, sharing them across triple j's multiple platforms throughout the week of the concert. The One Night Stand concert usually features a local Uearthed band/performer as a supporting act and is broadcast live on the radio and as a triple j web event, and is filmed for broadcast on ABC2.

#### *ABC Television Production outside of Sydney and Melbourne*

Over the last three years, the ABC's investment in production outside of Sydney and Melbourne has been significant and has been increasing.

- The number of programs commissioned from outside New South Wales and Victoria has remained steady over the last five years and increased in 2011-12. Since 2007-08, the ABC has maintained an average production output in the states outside New South Wales and Victoria, of 48 commissions per year. In 2011-12 the ABC commissioned 57 productions in states other than NSW and Victoria.<sup>9</sup>
- Between 2007-08 and 2011-12, the ABC commissioned over 240 separate programs outside NSW and Victoria (refer to Appendix 2 for examples).
- Over the last five years, the ABC has commissioned programs from 72 individual production companies outside NSW and Victoria.
- The ABC's financial contribution to productions commissioned from outside NSW and Victoria has remained steady over the last five years, with an average of \$27 million investment per year. Investment in 2011-12 was \$25 million. As noted above, strategic partnerships with state screen agencies have enabled leveraging of significant external investment into television production.
- Total production budgets outside NSW and Victoria has remained steady at an average of \$41 million per year. In 2011-12 total production budgets in these states was at its highest to date at \$47 million.
- In addition, the ABC has commissioned programs from NSW and Victoria that have been mainly filmed in regional areas. This includes drama titles such as *East of Everything*, *Cliffy*, *Sisters of War*, *Bed of Roses*, *Dr Blake Mysteries* and *Parer's War*, all of which included a significant amount of filming in regional areas and in states other than NSW and Victoria. Documentaries and factual programs such as *Country Town Rescue*, *Devil Island*, *Wide Open Road*, *Inside the Firestorm*, *Two Across the Great Divide* and *Dumb, Drunk and Racist* were also commissioned in NSW or Victoria, but filmed around the country.
- Whilst there has been some decline in the number of hours of production in Tasmania and Queensland, this is primarily due to the cessation of local football coverage,

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<sup>9</sup> This does not include productions by companies that were based in NSW or Victoria but filmed in regional areas.

resulting from the decisions by Queensland Rugby League and AFL Tasmania to pursue coverage agreements with commercial broadcasters.

- South Australia will continue to be a production hub, and is currently in development/production with the 16-part *Dream Build* series and the long-term project, *Restoration Home*. Recent productions include *Maggies' Christmas Feast*, *Poh's Kitchen Lends a hand*, *Poh's Kitchen on the Road* and *Poh's Kitchen*.

### *ABC Rural*

The ABC Rural department is an integral component of Local Radio. It produces local weekday *Rural Reports*, which are broadcast in each region, and *The Country Hour* programs in each state and the Northern Territory. *The Country Hour* is now in its 67th year. ABC Rural also produces content for broadcast on Radio National, including *Bush Telegraph* and *Country Breakfast* and in 2012, strengthened its focus on regional business reporting. The reach of specialist rural news and information has been broadened considerably including through podcasts and the rich and extensive content available through the ABC Rural portal.<sup>10</sup>

### *Radio National/Bush Telegraph*

Content reflecting rural and regional Australia is regularly heard on Radio National in *Breakfast* and *Drive* and a range of specialist programs.

Of particular significance is *Bush Telegraph*, the only daily, national radio program providing an insight into the issues and trends occurring outside Australia's capital cities. It examines food and fibre production, social concerns such as health and education and extends the national debates on vital issues like land management, food security and the environment. It features voices, experiences and lifestyles that challenge the stereotypes of rural life.

Recent regionally-focused stories on Radio National have included such diverse topics as stories on life on outback stations, the produce of the Eyre Peninsula, fish stocks in the Murray River and genetics and the Australian lamb industry.

### *Participation in regional events*

ABC Radio is involved in numerous regional events across Australia each year, providing coverage of these events on multiple platforms to local, national and global audiences.

Regional music and arts festivals such as Tamworth Music Festival, the Port Fairy and the Woodford Folk Festivals, and the Wangaratta Jazz Festival provide national stages for local artists and their performances are regularly showcased on ABC Radio's music services as well as the relevant local services.

A spreadsheet detailing the ABC's participation in local events is at Appendix 3.

### *ABC Classic FM*

ABC Classic FM records, broadcasts and covers festivals, concerts and performances in

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<sup>10</sup> [www.abc.net.au/rural](http://www.abc.net.au/rural)

regional Australia including the annual Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville and the Wangaratta Jazz Festival. Other festivals in 2012 included the Four Winds Festival from Barraga Bay in south eastern NSW, and the Huntington Music Festival in Mudgee NSW.

ABC Classic FM's Grab the Goanna competition, conducted every four years in conjunction with the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia (SIPCA), has seen two regional schools benefit as winners of grand pianos. Classic FM also recently provided coverage of the Hunter Music Festival in Mudgee.

*Midday with Margaret Throsby* regularly features guests from regional Australia talking about their lives and the music that inspires them.

## **Recent ABC announcement regarding production resources**

The ABC notes recent commentary in relation to the proposed allocation of some of its television production resources and welcomes the opportunity to further explain and contextualise these proposals for the Committee.

### *The ABC's production and investment decisions in context*

The ABC has a responsibility to use its scarce resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. Despite recent favourable funding allocations, in real terms, the ABC's income has diminished over the last two decades. The 2012–13 operational revenue from Government of \$840 million represents a decrease in real funding of \$253 million or 23.1% since 1985–86. In these constrained financial circumstances the ABC has continually reviewed its expenditure and services to ensure they are efficient and, where possible, more effective. In so doing, and with the aid of technological advances during this time, the ABC has been able to not only maintain a range of innovative, informative and entertaining services, it has also managed to expand its services. It has gone from a single analog television channel to providing four television channels, four national radio networks, 60 local radio stations and 11 digital radio services in each digital radio market. While the ABC received some additional funding from government for digital radio and TV transmission and for television drama in the 2009 triennium, this expansion in services has largely been managed through efficient use of existing budget allocations, notably in an environment where the emergence of new competing services has increased the costs of content.

This imperative towards efficient use of resources lies behind the development of the mixed television production model and the ABC's *Television Production Strategy 2011–13*.<sup>11</sup>

The mixed production model is discussed below and in more detail in Appendix 4; however, as a whole, the *Television Production Strategy* sets out the approach the ABC is taking to ensure its television production budget is invested in the most effective and efficient way, whilst still delivering to Australians the best possible programming. This includes making use of both internal and external production resources.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://about.abc.net.au/reports-publications/television-production-strategy-2011-2013/>

A mixed production model involves the use of three categories of production:

- **Pre-Purchase**, where the ABC commissions an independent production company to produce a program, however the ABC has overall editorial approval
- **Co-production** (mixed or fully funded), where the ABC commissions an independent production company to produce a program, however the ABC has overall editorial approval
- **Internal production**, where the ABC commissions its internal production unit to make a program and fully funds the production.

The application of the mixed production model is on a national basis. The use of this model does not mean the ABC will use all methods in a single location.

#### *The Tasmanian production unit*

As discussed above, the ABC must constantly assess its production activity, paying heed to industry developments, changing audience tastes and the need to utilise its resources as effectively and efficiently as possible. Through the commissioning process, the ABC decided not to recommission *Auction Room*. With this in mind, the ABC considered a new process is required for commissioning production in of Tasmanian, given financial constraints and future commissioned production demand. The ABC proposes to partner with independent producers as this will better provide the flexibility to commission Australian content that meets needs of the schedule, the requirements of the Charter and audience demand.

It is hoped that this approach will emulate the successful partnerships the ABC has put together with governments and their screen funding agencies in other states. This strategy will continue to enable the ABC to deliver on its Charter obligations to tell quality Australian stories across a range of genres. Some additional investment in News will also lead to increased national coverage from Tasmania.

Inflation, competition and a changing television market place led by new technology have contributed to an environment of increasing costs. Increased competition in the acquisitions market brought about by the rapid growth in the number of free-to-air digital television channels has also dramatically increased costs.

At the same time, revenues have decreased. DVD sales have decreased as content sales have moved online, where margins are considerably slimmer. Screenrights revenue has also dropped as viewers shift from download to streaming of content. Whilst the ABC received a considerable boost to its revenue in the last triennial funding agreement, this was directed towards drama and children's programming and the budgets for all other genres have remained at the same level as six years ago or in some cases, are lower. For example, the cash entertainment genre budget declined from \$13 million in 2006-07, to \$9.8 million in 2012-13.

Compounding the issue is the fixed nature of the labour component of the ABC's budget, which was a significant issue for the ABC when considering the future of the Tasmanian production unit.

Such a high investment in labour and small amount of free cash limit flexibility, restrict the

types of production that could occur to the skill sets of the staff already employed and required the ABC to find ways of “filling the asset” (ie, finding work for staff to carry out rather than letting demand drive resourcing). This inefficiency in expenditure meant a poor return on investment from the production unit, compared to the amount of production which could be leveraged from the existing budget through external production methods. The ABC considers that it would be prohibitively difficult to achieve the volume of production needed to make it economic to sustain the Tasmanian TV Production Unit.

Another issue facing production in Tasmania was the lack of scale. Having a small unit in an area with a very small production industry that is geographically remote from the rest of the country unavoidably increases costs. This is particularly true where the shows being produced are largely filmed in other parts of Australia, introducing significant travel costs.

A mixed model of production allows the ABC to leverage more funding for its productions and to be more flexible in the allocation of its resources. It also allows the ABC to develop and commission stories or programs about specific geographical regions and locale-based issues in partnership with local film makers. This in turn encourages those businesses to grow.

Further background information on the ABC’s mixed production model can be found at Appendix 4.

#### *A continued commitment to Tasmania*

The ABC is committed to regional stories that reflect the breadth and diversity of the nation, including Tasmania. The new approach to commissioning in Tasmania does not affect the ABC’s commitment to serving the state’s news, information and entertainment needs. The ABC will retain its offices in Launceston, Burnie and Hobart. Local news headlines and bulletins will continue to be produced and broadcast on Tasmania’s local radio services in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart and through the Tasmanian *7pm News* and *7.30*.

The ABC’s commitment to news in Tasmania was demonstrated most recently by its comprehensive coverage of the January 2013 bushfire emergency. The ABC’s reporters across the island state provided extensive local and national coverage as the emergency unfolded, reporting live from the field in all major fire zones. Supplemented by reporters, camera crews and live-linking equipment brought in from interstate, as well as the arrival of the ABC’s Melbourne-based helicopter, the ABC’s coverage was without parallel. Its exclusive coverage of the dramatic survival story of a family in Dunally led the news across the country, and was followed up and highlighted across the world.

At the same time as this national and international coverage was being supplied by the ABC network, Local Radio and local ABC News staff were providing regular and detailed emergency information to all parts of the state.

The reliability, commitment and extent of the ABC’s news coverage on such stories is underlined by the fact that the Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) regularly advises the public to stay informed by monitoring ABC Radio in addition to visiting the official TFS website.

Also, in February 2012 Christopher Lawrence will return to Tasmania to present *Classic FM Mornings* to a national audience.

In addition to local services, Tasmanians will also continue to benefit from other regional initiatives such as ABC Open and the full range of the ABC’s broadcast, online, catch-up and social media content.

The ABC also has strong connections with the Tasmanian community, and this will continue. For example, in 2012 the ABC Tasmania Giving Tree appeal celebrated 25 years. Over that time, more than a million dollars and hundreds of thousands of presents have been distributed to registered charities. ABC staff, former employees and more than 100 community members volunteered their time to raise the funds and gifts. An ABC News weather calendar is produced locally every year from photographs contributed by audience members for the 7pm bulletin. All funds raised go to the Giving Tree. In 2012, \$141,600 and about 30,000 presents were distributed to charity. Three weeks later (on 7 January 2013) a further \$20,000 was donated from the Giving Tree to the Red Cross for the Tasmanian Bushfires Appeal.

In 2012, ABC Tasmania staff worked with community members and stakeholders to create an exhibition marking the national broadcaster's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The exhibition was held in the Hobart Broadcast Centre foyer and showcased the ABC's history and current activities in Tasmania. The ABC partnered with the Sound Preservation Association of Tasmania, Broadcast Australia, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to create the display.

In addition, the ABC hosts community groups' exhibitions and events at the Hobart Broadcast Centre. In the past year these displays have promoted World Mental Health Day, Children's Book Week, Chinese New Year, Royal Hobart Regatta, One Word One Day – Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Festa Italia and Cosmos Recreational Services.

ABC Tasmania also provides work experience to numerous students across the year, principally in the News and Resources (journalists and camera operators) divisions. In early 2011, the ABC signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Riawunna Centre (University of Tasmania), Rosny College and Claremont College to provide work placement opportunities for Australian indigenous students. This is in addition to NAIDOC Week activities, which have in the past also included displays of student art work, students interviewing elders for radio and producing music for on air.

In place of internal ABC production in Tasmania, the ABC is proposing to invest \$1.5 million over three years in a production fund and is seeking a matching investment from the state Government. As noted above, this approach will emulate the successful partnerships the ABC with governments and their screen agencies in both South Australia and Western Australia, which have ensured continuity of local production in these states. Given the ability to leverage additional funds through co-productions, this approach is will sustain and grow Tasmanian production.

Through this initiative, the ABC will support Tasmanian production and provide a greater incentive for independent producers to pitch content across a range of genres – not just lifestyle programs. The ABC will continue to provide an ANZAC Day coverage and the hosting of other ad hoc events such as Q&A programs and state elections will be unaffected.

In an associated move, ABC News will increase its Tasmanian-based resources and content. This includes creating a new reporter position to develop Tasmanian stories for *Landline*, and to support Tasmanian stories across other news and current affairs programs, leading to increased national coverage from Tasmania.

### *Locally relevant content*

Assertions that the new approach to commissioning will result in less locally relevant content fundamentally misunderstands modern television production and the relationship between the geographic location of production facilities and the creation of “relevant” content.

The presence or otherwise of a production unit in a particular area does not guarantee the creation of content relevant to that area. Parts of productions commissioned from units or companies based in regional capital cities may have occurred outside of these cities and/or states. For example, while all pre- and post-production for the Tasmanian-based production *Auction Room Series 2* took place in Tasmania, not one story was filmed in Tasmania. On the other hand, the drama series *The Straits*, commissioned from a Sydney-based company, was filmed entirely in northern Queensland. Documentaries by their very nature are filmed in a variety of locations. By way of example, *Two Across the Great Divide* was shot in regional Victoria, NSW and Queensland but was commissioned from a Sydney-based production company.

The internally produced *Q&A* is commissioned from a Sydney-based unit and the majority of production is undertaken in NSW; however the program travels to regional areas across all the states and territories.

### *The ABC’s Charter obligations*

The Charter of the ABC does not require it to maintain an internal production capacity in every state and territory. The requirement, as stated in the ABC Act, is to provide comprehensive broadcasting services which contribute to a sense of national identity and that inform, entertain and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community.<sup>12</sup> In providing those services, the ABC must also provide a balance between programs that are specialised and programs of wide appeal.

The ABC believes that contributing to a sense of national identity and reflecting the diversity of the Australian community will require that the Corporation broadcast stories that examine, celebrate or reflect the culture, history or geography of Australian “places”. However, as outlined above, commissioning and broadcasting programs about particular regions or locations does not necessarily require the ABC to retain a production capacity in that region. The ABC has contributed to local production in Tasmania by commissioning programs about Tasmania or with Tasmanian production companies. These include *Bali High Wedding*, *The Abbey* and *The Mission*. In addition, projects in production either in or about Tasmania include *Holy Switch*, *Devil’s Island* and *The Outlaw Michael Howe*. All of these programs have been commissioned with independent producers. The presence of an ABC internal production unit in Tasmania has had no bearing on the production of these programs.

Similarly, the need to tell local stories is not necessarily served by the presence of a local in-house production capacity. The ABC has also commissioned internal programs such as *Collectors*, *Gardening Australia* and *Auction Room* from the internal production unit in Hobart.

The ABC has also commissioned programs in Tasmania, or featuring Tasmania, from other parts of Australia. Programs such as *Poh’s Kitchen*, *Who’s Been Sleeping in My House?*, *Q&A*,

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<sup>12</sup> The ABC’s Charter is set out in section 6 of the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*



*Compass* and *Catalyst* tell stories about places and regions around the country without needing to restrict themselves to just the place where they are produced. All of these programs have included episodes and segments about Tasmania.

The ABC remains committed to meeting its Charter obligations. In that regard, the ABC will continue to commission programs featuring Tasmania and/or with Tasmanian production companies and to cover local events. Any reduction of in-house production in Tasmania will have no impact on the ABC's ability to meet its obligations.

While this is a difficult time for the ABC's Tasmanian staff, the Corporation believes that the proposed changes will better enable it to deliver on its Charter obligations to tell quality Australian stories across a range of genres and remain relevant and viable as Australia's national public broadcaster in the 21st Century.

#### *Recent Senate Inquiry into ABC production*

The ABC's approach to managing its resources and the use of a mixed production model were considered in detail little more than 12 months ago by the Senate Environment and Communications Committee's *Inquiry into Recent ABC Programming Decisions* in October 2011. While specific measures have been implemented, there have been no changes to the ABC's production strategy since the 2011 inquiry.

Significantly, that inquiry, and the subsequent Government response, supported the efficiency of the ABC's mixed production model, recognising it as a necessary strategy in the face of a difficult financial environment. This is supported by the following extracts from the Committee's majority report:

"The committee supports the ABC's mixed production model referred to earlier in this report. The committee acknowledges that there will be times when co-produced content is preferred and others when internally produced material is preferred."<sup>13</sup>

"It is clear that a mixed production model is commonplace around the world, including in North America, Europe and Asia. Based on the evidence presented during this inquiry, the committee recognises that the ABC is following a wider trend to commission content from external sources."<sup>14</sup>

The Committee also supported the independence of ABC programming decisions, emphasising the need for the ABC to be able to judge how to best use its limited resources, in the interests of its audiences:

"The committee recognises that as an independent national broadcaster the ABC has the right to produce programs it believes will meet its Charter obligations and that editorial decisions are the responsibility of ABC management and should not be influenced by

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<sup>13</sup> Report of the Environment and Communications References Committee Inquiry into Recent ABC programming decisions, October 2011, p 20

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p 20

government.”<sup>15</sup>

“The committee also recognises that as a result of recent technological innovations, to fulfil its Charter obligations and to meet growing audience expectations, the ABC is faced with a range of increasing costs which are outstripping the indexed funding provided by government.”<sup>16</sup>

The Government response to the Committee’s Report also expressed clear support for the mixed production model and the independence of the ABC:

“While the Government provides an overall level of funding for the ABC [...] [i]nternal ABC programming decisions are the responsibility of the ABC Board and Executive.”<sup>17</sup>

The Government response also addressed the balance of production undertaken outside Sydney and Melbourne, finding that the ABC has a strong and ongoing commitment to being present and active in regional areas:

“The ABC is committed to maintaining a significant capacity to internally produce quality programming across the regions in addition to news, sport and current affairs. The ABC makes television, including news and current affairs, in every state and territory. In other parts of the country it makes programs, including current affairs, for national broadcast.”<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

The ABC accepts there will always be scrutiny around its performance and welcomes this inquiry as part of this process. The ABC is proud to stand on its record on delivering regional diversity across all its platforms.

The ABC, as a tax-payer-funded organisation, must do its best to ensure it is using its resources as effectively and efficiently as possible and this becomes even more pressing in a difficult and changing media market. In this environment the ABC has continued to innovate and grow, providing a rich and diverse suite of services across Australia and on the full range of platforms and devices consumers now use.

The ABC’s mixed television production model is part of the response to these pressures and will allow the ABC to leverage finance from other bodies to deliver greater amounts of quality Australian content from within existing Budget allocations.

In these circumstances, the ABC considers that it is no longer economical to maintain a permanent television production unit in Tasmania and that to continue with the present arrangements would be an unwise use of scarce resources.

However, these changes to television production in no way represent a lessening of the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p 25

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p 42

<sup>17</sup> Page 2

<sup>18</sup> Page 3

ABC's commitment to Tasmania, or regional audiences more generally. As outlined in this submission, the ABC has a deep commitment to its audiences in regional and rural areas, reflected in the depth and breadth of its regional content and services.

## APPENDIX 1

## ABC News reporters in regional stations

LOCATION		Number of news staff
<b>NSW</b>		<b>25</b>
	Bega	2
	Coffs Harbour	2
	Dubbo	1
	Erina	1
	Lismore	2
	Muswellbrook	1
	Newcastle	5
	Nowra	1
	Orange	2
	Port Macquarie	2
	Tamworth	2
	Wagga Wagga	2
	Wollongong	2
<b>VIC</b>		<b>13</b>
	Ballarat	2
	Bendigo	2
	Horsham	1
	Mildura	1
	Morwell	1
	Sale	2
	Shepparton	1
	Warrnambool	1
	Wodonga	2
<b>SA</b>		<b>8</b>
	Broken Hill	2
	Mt Gambier	1
	Port Augusta	1
	Port Lincoln	1
	Port Pirie	2
	Renmark	1
<b>Tas</b>		<b>5</b>
	Burnie	1
	Launceston	4
<b>QLD</b>		<b>25</b>
	Bundaberg	2
	Cairns	3

ABC SUBMISSION ON REFLECTING AND REPRESENTING REGIONAL DIVERSITY

	Gladstone	1
	Gold Coast	4
	Longreach	1
	Mackay	2
	Mt Isa	1
	Rockhampton	3
	Sunshine Coast	2
	Toowoomba	2
	Townsville	4
<b>WA</b>		<b>9</b>
	Albany	1
	Broome	2
	Bunbury	2
	Geraldton	1
	Kalgoorlie	2
	Karratha	1
<b>NT</b>		<b>3</b>
	Alice Springs	3

## APPENDIX 2

### Examples of programs produced outside of NSW and Victoria

ANZAC DAY  
 Governor General's Australia Day Address  
 Emily in Japan  
 Australia Celebrates  
 Australian Of The Year  
 Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony  
 In A League Of Their Own  
 Yarning Up 1  
 Samson and Delilah  
 Naidoc Under the Stars  
 NT AFL  
 NT Sports Awards  
 Indigenous All Stars Vs AFL  
 NT Rugby Union Finals  
 Tiwi Island Grand Final  
 Big Boss (aka Baymawarranga)  
 Coniston  
 Croker Island Exodus  
 Kakadu  
 Big Name, No Blanket (aka George Rrurrambu)  
 Escape from Scorpion Island  
 Lost Years - a Sea Turtle Odyssey (aka Loggerheads – The Lost Years)  
 Rare Chicken Rescue  
 Roller Derby Dolls (aka Roller Girls)  
 Salt  
 The Curse of the Gothic Symphony  
 Spirit of Christmas 2007  
 Bowls Australian Indoor Championships 2007  
 Bowls Queensland Open  
 Bowls World Championships  
 Qld Cup Rugby League  
 The New Black: Nia's Melancholy  
 ABC3 Interstitial Initiative - Laserbeak Man  
 From the Ashes  
 Orchids: My Intersex Adventure  
 The Trouble with St Mary's  
 Dancing Down Under  
 Go Lingo! (aka Letterbox) Series 1  
 Edge of Nowhere  
 The 100+ Club  
 The Straits  
 Bringing Uncle Home

Constructive Mob
3 on 3 Series 3
Bindi's Bootcamp
WAC
ABBA: Bang a Boomerang
Nothing on Earth
Reptilian Battleground
Mabo
The Strange Calls
Call to Country - Rainforest Warriorz (aka Atherton Tablelands)
Flash Black: Blackbuster
Golf: RACV Ladies Masters 2012
WOMADelaide Series 2007
Casualties of War
Missing - Presumed Dead
The Pinnaroo Surfer
Talking Heads
The Cook and the Chef
SANFL
Henry and Bee
Heywire Series 2008
ABC3 Interstitial Initiative - Horace in Slow Motion
ABC3 Interstitial Initiative - Itty Bitty Ditties
Artscape: Chasing Shadows
Stunt Love (aka Railroad Man, aka J.P McGowan)
Poh's Kitchen
Peleda
Artscape - Hannah Gadsby
HIVE: I Want To Dance Better At Parties
Love-Heart Baby (Opening Shot) (aka Project Baby)
Meatwork (Opening Shot) (aka The Disassembly Line)
Croc College (Working Title)
Dream Build (aka Tough Build) Series 1
Poh's Kitchen Lends a Hand (aka Poh's Kitchen Series 3)
Race to London (AKA Olympic Dreams)
Call to Country - Jack Buckskin
Collectors
Tasmanian Hockey
Tasmanian VFL
The Mission Series 1
ABC3 Interstitial Initiative - Mega Bites
Tasmanian State League 2010
Bali High Wedding
Auction Room (aka Auctions)
Collectors Series 7
Holy Switch
The Outlaw Michael Howe
Young Performer Awards 2007
Roller Coaster (Hostings)

Gallipoli Submarine  
God Made Them Blind  
Navy Divers  
Something in the Water  
The Hunt For HMAS Sydney  
3 Acts of Murder (aka Blood in the Sand aka The Conversation  
Killer)  
Bran Nue Dae  
Can We Help  
Bowls Tri Nations  
Hopman Cup  
WAFL  
Motel Deception (iArts Initiative)  
ReFace (iArts Initiative)  
A Royal Romance  
Addicted to Money  
Deadly Yarns 4  
SKIPPY: Australia's First Superstar  
Surviving Mumbai (aka Terror in Mumbai)  
The Great Escape - The Reckoning  
The Story of Bran Nue Dae  
Bowls Perth International  
ABC3 Interstitial Initiative - Desdemona  
Deadly Yarns 5  
Dinosaur Stampede  
Jandamarra's War  
Life Architecturally (aka Artscape: Arthouse)  
The Making of Collision Course (aka WA Dance Project)  
Carols from St Georges Cathedral 2009  
Who's Been Sleeping in My House?  
Sound Chamber (iArts Initiative)  
MAL.COM (aka West Coast Kids)  
On a Wing and a Prayer  
Deadly Yarns 6  
Homeward Bound  
Satellite Boy  
Chateau Chunder: A Wine Revolution (aka The Australian Wine  
Revolution)  
Desert War (aka Desert Rats)  
Boomtown (AKA Peppermint Grove)  
Vet School (working title)  
An Accidental Soldier (aka The Deserter)  
The Turning  
Call to Country- Eloquent Flower  
Flash Black: In the Air  
Outside Chance (aka Inside AFL)  
Yagan  
Hockey International Super Series  
Live - The Queen's Farewell Barbecue



## APPENDIX 3

ABC REGIONAL COMMUNITY EVENTS 2011-12				
Network	State	Date	Station	Event title
<b>Jun-11</b>				
LOCAL	TAS	5/06/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Treadlightly
LOCAL	TAS	14/06/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Closure of the Triabunna Woodchip mill
LOCAL	TAS	21/06/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Meeting the locals in Ulverstone
LOCAL	TAS	22/06/2011	24/07/1902	Meeting the locals in Deloraine
LOCAL	NSW	3-5 June 2011	97.3 ABC Illawarra	Illawarra Music Festival
LOCAL	NSW	19/06/2011	ABC New England North West	Soweto Gospel Choir
LOCAL	NSW	20/06/2011	ABC Mid North Coast	Soweto Gospel Choir
Local	NT	1/07/2010	105.7 ABC	Territory Day OB
<b>Jul-11</b>				
LOCAL	NT	20/07/2011	105.7 ABC	Hospital Visit
LOCAL	NT	22/07/2011	105.7 ABC	Royal Darwin Show
LOCAL	QLD	8/07/2011	612 and Coast FM	Musgrave Park Family Day
LOCAL	QLD	16-21 July 2011	630 Townsville, 612 ABC Brisbane, 91.7 ABC Coast FM	Country Comfort Hour
LOCAL	QLD	31/07/2011	612 Statewide	Regional Flavours
LOCAL	TAS	20/07/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Meeting the locals in Huonville and surrounding area
LOCAL	TAS	28/07/2011	ABC Northern Tasmania	North West Tourism Conference
LOCAL	TAS	29/07/2011	ABC Northern Tasmania	Devonport Jazz Festival
LOCAL	VIC	15/07 - 17/07/2011	ABC Central Vic	Festival of Lamb' and 'Women of Wool'
LOCAL	VIC	27/07/2011	ABC Goulburn Murray	Albury Train Station
LOCAL	VIC	23/07/2011	ABC South West Vic	Warrnambool Arts Gallery (Australian Portraits)
CFM	TAS	3/7, 10/7, 17/7, 24/7, 31/7/2011		Sunday Live in Hobart
<b>Aug-11</b>				
Local	VIC	25/08/2011	Ballarat	BC Shutter Up Forum
Local	NSW	5/08/2011	ABC Local Radio NSW	KNIT IN
Local	NSW	16/08/2011	ABC Local Radio NSW	Evenings OB from Australian Museum

ABC SUBMISSION ON REFLECTING AND REPRESENTING REGIONAL DIVERSITY

Local	NSW	20 - 21 August 2011	ABC Western Plains	Mudgee Readers Festival
Local	NSW	26-28 August 2011	97.3 ABC Illawarra	Sydney Travelling Film Festival - Huskisson
Local	NT	12/08/2011	105.7 ABC	Darwin Festival
Local	SA	4/08/2011	1485 ABC Eyre & West Coast	Local Life Launch
Local	TAS	25/08/2011	ABC Northern Tasmania	Junction Arts
Classic FM	VIC	9/08/2011		Music Makers Address
Classic FM	QLD	7, 14, 21, 28 August 2011		Sunday Live Brisbane
Dig	ABC Country	26/08/2011		Saturday Night Country with Felicity Urquhart
Radio National	National	13/08/2011		East Africa Appeal
Radio National	QLD	18/08/2011		GoMA TALKS
<b>Sep-11</b>				
Local	NT	30/09/2011	105.7 ABC	Humpty Doo OB
Local	Qld	8/09/2011	National (except Mel)	Conversations
Local	Qld	9/09/2011	National (except Mel)	Conversations
Local	TAS	3/09/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Spring into Spring
Local	TAS	6/09/2011	936 ABC Hobart	Ryk's breakfast challenge #1 bus to work
Local	TAS	13/09/2011	936 ABC Hobart	Ryk's breakfast challenge #2 Sorell Mens Shed
Local	TAS	22/09/2011	936 ABC Hobart	Ryk's breakfast challenge # 3
Local	VIC	19/09/2011	Local Radio Victoria	Festival of Derek
Local	VIC	20/09/2011	Local Radio Victoria	Festival of Derek
Local	VIC	21/09/2011	Local Radio Victoria	Festival of Derek
Local	Newcastle	5/09/2011	1233 ABC Newcastle	Q&A Listener Tour
Local	NSW	1 - 30 September 2011	ABC Local Radio NSW	Get Reading 2011
Local	NSW	3-11 September 2011	ABC Local Radio NSW	History Week 2011
Local	NSW	17 September - 16 October 2011	ABRRiverina, ABC Central West, ABC south East, 97.3 ABC Illawarra and 92.5 ABC Central Coast	Floriade 2011
Local	NSW	23 - 25 September 2011	ABC Western Plains	Moorambilla Festival, Coonamble
Classic	QLD	3/09/2011		YPA Grand Final
Classic	NSW	4/9/2011, 11/09/2011, 18/09/2011, 25/9/2011		Sunday Live Newcastle
Classic	VIC	14/09/2011		HUSH concert and CD Launch
Classic	SA	22/09/2011		Keys to Music Live

ABC SUBMISSION ON REFLECTING AND REPRESENTING REGIONAL DIVERSITY

RN	TAS	1-2/09/2011		Bush Tele in Tasmania
triple j	VIC/NS W/QLD /ACT	1/09/2011		"Straight To You" triple j's tribute to Nick Cave
triple j	Austra- lia-wide	13/09/2011		triple j presents TV - ABC2
<b>Oct-11</b>				
Local	TAS	12/10/2011	936 ABC Hobart	Ride to Work Day
Local	TAS	12/10/2011	ABC Northern Tasmania	Ride to Work Day
Local	TAS	12/10/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Mental Health Week
Local	TAS	20/10/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Childrens Day Royal Hobart Show
Local	TAS	26/10/2011	936 ABC Hobart	Afternoons is a load of old rubbish
Local	NT	23/10/2011	105.7 ABC	Cyclone Awareness Week
Local	NSW	1 - 31/10/11	702 ABC Sydney and ABC Local Radio NSW	Crave Sydney International Food Festival
Local	NSW	7-8/10/2011	ABC Central West	Opera at the Dish and 50th anniversary of Parkes Observatory
Local	NSW	15/10/2011	92.5 ABC Central Coast	Opera in The Vineyards with Kiri Te Kanawa
Local	WA	15/10/2011	LOCAL WA	
ABC Jazz	VIC	30/10/2011	National Jazz Awards (Wangaratta)	
<b>Nov-11</b>				
Local	NSW	4 - 6/11/2011	ABC Coffs Coast	Sydney Travelling Film Festival
Local	NSW	12/11/2011	ABC Western Plains and ABC New England North West	Crooked Mountain Concert
Local	NSW	16/11/2011	ABC Local Radio NSW	NSW Premier's Spelling Bee
Local	NT	26/11/2011	105.7 ABC and 783 ABC Alice Springs	Grandstand's Birthday
Local	TAS	4/11/2011	ABC Northern Tasmania	Tasmanian Craft Fair
Local	TAS	18/11/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Launch of ABC Giving Tree 2011
Local	TAS	19/11/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Petsperts Broadcast and Open Day
Local	VIC	8/11/2011	ABC SWD	Suicide & mental Health Forum, 'let Talk About it' Forum:
Local	WA	26/11/2011	Local WA	Grandstand 21st OB at Challenge Stadium
Local	WA	29/11/2011	Local WA	Dr Karl Bookshelf Event
triple j	NSW	24/11/2011		Tom and Alex's listener 21st

ABC SUBMISSION ON REFLECTING AND REPRESENTING REGIONAL DIVERSITY

<b>Dec-11</b>				
Local	NSW	19 Nov - 19 Dec 2011	ABC LR NSW	Don't Dis My Ability
Local	NSW	1/12/2011	ABC LR NSW	Giving Tree
Local	TAS	7/12/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	Bureau of Meteorology
Local	TAS	12-16/12/2011	936 ABC Hobart and ABC Northern Tasmania	ABC Giving Tree Bike Ride
Local	VIC	December	774/VIC	ABC Giving Tree Appeal
Local	VIC	15/12/11 & 16/12/11	Goulburn Murray	ABC GM 80th Birthday
Local	WA	19/12/2011	Local WA	Listener Day at Art Gallery of WA - Princely Treasures
Classic	SA	3/12/2011	Classic 100 Countdown Concert	
<b>Jan-12</b>				
	TAS	30/01/2012	936 ABC Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon with Penny Terry inaugural program
National network	NSW	9/01/2012	RN	Hope 2012
triple j	QLD	22/01/2012		Big Day Out Gold Coast OB
<b>Feb-12</b>				
Local Radio	NT	19/02/2012	105.7 ABC Darwin	Anniversary of Darwin bombing
Local Radio	NT	28/02/2012	105.7 ABC Darwin	Katherine Visitor Centre Anniversary
Local Radio	VIC	17-19/02/2012	ABC GM Shepp	Riverboats Music Festival.
triple j	National	23/02/2012	SLAM Day	SLAM Day
<b>Mar-12</b>				
Local Radio	NSW	10/03/2012	ABC South East	Cooma Show
Local Radio	NSW	23-35 March 2012	ABC Mid North Coast	Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival
Local Radio	NSW	23 - 25 March 2012	ABC North Coast	BIG SCREEN in Yamba
Local Radio	NSW	25/03/2012	ABC Central West	Mitchell Conservatorium of Music - Jazz on the Verandah fundraiser
Local Radio	SA	15/03/2012	639 ABC North and West	ABC North and West 80th Birthday
Local Radio	VIC	2/03/2012	ABC Mildura	Big Screen and Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival
Local Radio	VIC	6/03/2012	Gippsland	Community Stakeholder Soiree Gippsland
Local Radio	VIC	7/03/2012	Sth West Vic	Live Broadcast with Jeremy Lee
Local Radio	VIC	10-12/03/2012	Sth West Vic	Port Fairy Folk Festival.
Local Radio	VIC	28/03/2012	ABC Ballarat	Melb Symphony Orchestra
Local Radio	VIC	30/03/2012	ABC Ballarat	Risky Business: Cultural
<b>Apr-12</b>				
Local	TAS	3/04/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon at George Town

ABC SUBMISSION ON REFLECTING AND REPRESENTING REGIONAL DIVERSITY

Local	TAS	12/04/2012	936/northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon at Sheffield
Local	TAS	26/04/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon at Kempton
Local	TAS	27/04/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon at Dodges Ferry
Local	VIC	Thurs 19	ABC SW VIC & Ballarat	Rural Summit Vic
LOCAL	WA	30/04/2012	ABC South West	delicious Produce Award Dinner
Local Radio	NSW	27 April - 24 May	All regional stations NSW	Sesame Street - Elmo's World Tour
<b>May-12</b>				
		4 - 6 May 2012	97.3 ABC Illawarra	Sydney Travelling Film Festival Wollongong
Local Radio	NSW	18-20 May 2012	ABC Western Plains	Art Unlimited - Dunedoo
Local Radio	NSW	18 - 20 May 2012	ABC North Coast	Sydney Travelling Film Festival Byron Bay
Local Radio	NSW	21/05/2012	ABC North Coast	ABC Trailer in Port Macquarie
Local Radio	NSW	23/05/2012	ABC Western Plains	Let The Sun Shine
Local Radio	SA	31/05/2012	639 ABC North and West	Sports Night at Bute Football Club
Local	TAS	2/05/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon
Local	TAS	3/05/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Mornings
Local	TAS	4/05/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoon
Local	TAS	03-04/05/2012	936/Northern Tasmania	The Country Hour
Local	TAS	10/05/2012	936	Drive - Community Conversations - Aged Care
Local	TAS	11/05/2012	936/ABC Northern Tasmania	Your Afternoons
Local	TAS	20/05/2012	936/ABC Northern Tasmania	Sunday
Local	TAS	21/05/2012	936/ABC Northern Tasmania	Mornings
Local	TAS	22/05/2012	936/ABC Northern Tasmania	Mornings
Local	TAS	24/05/2012	936/ABC Northern Tasmania	Mornings
Local	VIC	Tues 8	ABC South West Vic	MSO Regs Tour: Warrnambool
CFM	VIC		Keys to Music Concert	Keys To Music presenter Graham Abbott conducts and hosts these concerts with state symphony orchestras and are designed to educate and inform interested audiences. May 11

### The Mixed Production Model

As canvassed in the Senate Environment and Communications Committee's 2011 Inquiry Into Recent ABC Programming Decisions, the ABC operates a mixed production model both in terms of commissioning television programs and financing productions.

The categories of production are as follows:

- **Independent productions:**
  - **Pre-Purchase** is where the ABC commissions an independent production company to produce a program, however the ABC has overall editorial approval. The contractual arrangement includes a licence fee only. The ABC's financial contribution will be in the form of cash only.
  - **Co-production** (mixed or fully funded) is where the ABC commissions an independent production company to produce a program, however the ABC has overall editorial approval. The ABC will either fully, or in part, fund these productions through a combination of labour, facilities and cash. The independent producer will provide the intellectual property and be responsible for the creative management of the production.
- **Internal production** is where the ABC commissions its internal production units to produce a program. These programs are fully funded through a combination of labour, facilities and cash. The ABC develops the intellectual property, is responsible for the creative management of the production and owns all rights in the completed program. It should be noted that internal production still provides the foundation of ABC television programming. Over the past three years ABC TV has commissioned over 80% of its content hours from in-house.

A "mixed production" model involves the use of all these production models and provides considerable creative and financial benefits.

A mixed production model that utilises the best of the ABC's internal resources but which also allows the ABC to work with independent producers is the most efficient way for the Corporation to meet its Charter obligations. Commissioning a mix of internal and external production allows the ABC to deploy its resources and funding in the most efficient and effective manner.

A mixed production model:

- Provides the ABC with the flexibility to better manage the allocation of its limited resources. This includes allowing the ABC to leverage funding from additional sources
- Allows the ABC to access the best ideas and talent from within the ABC and from the independent production sector
- Ensures the ABC is able to contribute more broadly to the development of a sustainable local content creation industry

- Helps to promote a diversity of voices and ideas on ABC TV.

A mixed production model includes a component of internal productions. The ABC's *Television Production Strategy 2011-2013* includes a commitment to an average of 75% of hours produced being commissioned internally over the three years of the strategy. The ABC is working to this strategy and is on track to meet this commitment.

Of particular importance in the mixed model is the financial leveraging which is possible under a mixed production model. As a result of its strategic partnerships with state and federal screen agencies, the ABC has been able to leverage significant external investment into television production in the states outside of Victoria and NSW. In 2009-10, total production value was \$40 million. In 2011-12, following an increase in funding in the 2009 triennium, total production value had grown to \$47 million. Without access to these additional funds, the total hours that the ABC could produce in particular genres such as Drama, Narrative Comedy and Children's would be significantly reduced.

The value and efficacy of the mixed production model was recently recognised by a number of stakeholders, as part of the 2011 Senate inquiry in ABC programming decisions. For example:

"The overriding sense from submitters on both sides of the internal versus co-production debate is that a mixed production model is a necessary feature of modern broadcasting."<sup>19</sup>

The independent producers' submission outlined that "over the last five years, the ABC's contribution to external projects has triggered, on average, at least double additional funding from external funders such as state and federal funding bodies. These leveraged funds are not available for internally produced ABC productions."<sup>20</sup>

"The committee believes that a degree of competition between internal and external sources for pitching new program ideas is in the best interests of the ABC's television programming, noting that from the audience's perspective the two distinct forms of commissioning should complement each other. Sourcing the best program ideas either from within or outside the ABC will ultimately be in the best interests of the broadcaster."<sup>21</sup>

The Government's response to the Committee's inquiry report also supported the ABC's mixed production model approach:

"The Government does not consider the mixed production model diminishes the ABC's independence or skills base. The mixed production model harnesses the skills and experience of both the independent and ABC production teams, and ensures viewers

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<sup>19</sup> Report of the Environment and Communications Committee's Inquiry into Recent ABC Programming Decisions, 2011, p 11

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p 14

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p 21

benefit from seeing more quality Australian productions.”<sup>22</sup>

“external production is able to deliver efficiencies where the total budgets are relatively high (for example, drama production) and where the ABC could not afford to fund them itself without significantly reducing broadcasting hours. External partnerships also allow the ABC to access (and foster) ideas and talent from outside the ABC. External productions therefore play an important role in ensuring the ABC is able to meet its Charter obligation to broadcast programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into Recent ABC Programming Decisions*, 2012, p 3

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p 3