

## **Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

submission to the

### **House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts**

### **Inquiry into the importance of public and commercial broadcasting, online content and live production to rural and regional Australia, including the arts, news and other services**

February 2016

**Note:** the ABC provides this submission in multiple file formats to maximise accessibility. Where differences between versions of the document exist, the PDF version is definitive.





ABC submission to the House of  
Representatives Standing Committee on  
Communications and the Arts

**Inquiry into the importance of public and  
commercial broadcasting, online content  
and live production to rural and regional  
Australia, including the arts, news and  
other services**

February 2016

---

**Introduction**

The ABC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inaugural inquiry. The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

...the importance of public and commercial broadcasting, online content and live production to rural and regional Australia, including the arts, news and other services.

As Australia's oldest national broadcaster, the ABC has a long connection with, and a deep commitment to, serving all Australian audiences.

This submission sets out the array of services the Corporation provides and the strategies it is using to connect with the 7.7 million Australians living outside the major capital cities. It also demonstrates that, in balancing its Charter obligations with reduced funding, the ABC delivers on its obligations to rural and regional Australia, and that this is widely understood and appreciated by these audiences. At a time when the disruptive impact of new technology is forcing many commercial media outlets to contract their services in the regions, or to exit completely, the ABC stands alone in investing more in local content.

The Corporation notes the Committee's emphasis on both new and old platforms as delivery mechanisms for rural and regional audiences. The ABC pioneered the extension of digital services to rural and regional Australia. While television and radio broadcasting remain important distribution platforms, trends here and overseas have reinforced the validity of that strategy. Digital applications are increasingly important in informing, educating and entertaining audiences who are shifting away from appointment viewing, switching to mobile and keen to curate their own media experiences.

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

This inquiry has a strong emphasis on the provision of arts content to regional audiences. Promotion of the arts is a key element of the ABC Charter and the national broadcaster is aware of the important role it plays in showcasing the talent of Australian artists—including those living and working outside the major centres.

The submission notes the importance of infrastructure in servicing the needs of rural and regional Australia. The ABC is a firm believer in the principle of equality of services—all taxpayers contribute to the funding of the Corporation and thus all should have, within the constraints of resourcing, access to its platforms and content. The ABC believes, as Committee Chairman, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP, stated when announcing this inquiry, that ‘people should be able to access and enjoy the arts, and have reliable and relevant news and other services no matter where they live in Australia.’<sup>1</sup>

The size of the continent and the remote nature of many rural communities makes infrastructure provision a challenge and the reality is many Australians are denied ABC services and programming because of infrastructure shortfalls, most notably in the area of digital radio and fast broadband. The Committee should consider these factors when deliberating on media services in rural and regional Australia.

The ABC notes that this is one of two parliamentary inquiries currently examining the Corporation’s commitment to, and work in, rural and regional Australia. On 4 December 2015, two days after this Committee announced its inquiry, the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee initiated an inquiry into the ABC Amendment (Rural and Regional Advocacy) Bill 2015 introduced by Senator Bridget McKenzie of The Nationals. The Bill seeks to amend the ABC’s Charter to impose additional regional requirements on the ABC. The ABC is participating in the inquiry into that Bill.

The ABC also refers the Committee to a number of submissions made by the Corporation in recent years, which articulate the ABC’s performance in providing local content and servicing areas outside the major population centres.<sup>2</sup> The final reports of those inquiries and government responses to recommendations are also relevant.

### **ABC funding**

As a public broadcaster, the ABC is primarily funded through public appropriations. Its ability to fulfil its Charter obligations, as set out in *the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (‘ABC Act’), including the delivery of services referred to in the terms of reference for this review, is necessarily shaped by funding provided to it by Government.

Any assessment of the Corporation’s performance must therefore take into consideration ABC funding. In 2014, the Government imposed funding cuts on the Corporation over a five-

---

<sup>1</sup> Media Alert, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts,

2 December 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014; Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity (2012–13); Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions (2011).

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

year period amounting to a \$250 million reduction over five years (with a further \$50 million per annum on-going reduction in the ABC’s budget). The net impact of the cuts is detailed in Table 1, below.

**Table 1. ABC funding cuts 2014–15 to 2018–19**

<b>Reduction (\$ million)</b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17</b>	<b>2017–18</b>	<b>2018–19</b>	<b>Total</b>
1% reduction, May 2014 budget	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	45.0
Australia Network Service	10.6	22.0	22.0	23.0	23.0	100.6
Cross-portfolio reduction (marketing)	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.8	–	2.8
November 2014 Funding reduction	–	20.0	62.0	56.0	69.0	207.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>101.0</b>	<b>355.4</b>

The ABC has adhered to its commitment to deliver these funding cuts via support-service efficiencies and other non-audience-facing measures. However, the Corporation has always been upfront about the need to invest in new digital content to keep faith with its Charter and with audiences. The opportunity cost of the funding cuts was the inability of the ABC to use its own efficiencies to fund digital investment. Changes have been made to the Corporation’s content output to generate \$20 million for new digital initiatives. For clarity, ABC Regional has been quarantined from this exercise.

The ABC faces further financial pressures as a result of two terminating programs this financial year. If funding for Enhanced Newsgathering (\$20 million in 2015–16) and Digital Content Delivery (\$14 million in 2015–16) is not renewed, then the ABC will have to review services and jobs to address the shortfall. Enhanced Newsgathering funds have been used to provide ongoing audience benefits, including state-based online news sites; regional video journalists (VJs) and camera crews; new bureaux in Geelong, Parramatta and Ipswich; and specialist reporters. It is impossible for the Corporation to maintain the same level of output, particularly in the News Division, with an effective cut of 10 per cent to its annual operating budget.

## **ABC Regional**

The ABC has been an integral part of regional Australia since the Corporation’s origins in the early 1930s.

ABC Rockhampton and Newcastle were among the first stations to broadcast under the fledgling ABC brand in 1932. ABC Rural, which is now part of ABC Regional, recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. Its flagship program, *Country Hour*, is recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the longest-running radio program in Australia and one of the most durable radio programs in the world. To ensure the enduring nature of the ABC’s connection with regional audiences, the ABC’s organisational structure and activities relating to regional coverage have not remained static over time, but have kept up with audience demands and technological changes.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The Corporation maintains the largest regional broadcasting footprint in Australia. It stands alone in maintaining the scale and effectiveness of its regional and rural operations, despite suffering in recent times from reduced revenue. The ABC's position of trust and authority and its multi-platform skills enable it to act as a virtual town square—linking remote communities to the broader population and vice-versa—and providing vital sources of information and interactivity.

In times of emergency and stress, the ABC provides a vital connection between residents and authorities.

The creation of the ABC's Regional Division in November 2014 is in keeping with the audience's expectations and the Corporation's commitment to servicing regional audiences. In announcing the creation of the new division, ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott, said the impetus was an awareness that, at a time of immense change within the media sector, the role of the ABC in providing an important link to communities in distant parts of Australia had become paramount.

Under its Director, Fiona Reynolds, who is based in Launceston, ABC Regional has set itself the vision to be 'the champion of regional voices in Australian conversations, culture and stories.' Its mission is to 'deliver outstanding content, services and activities to reflect and develop regional communities and enrich national conversations.' Contrary to assertions of 'Sydney-centric thinking', the Division's executive comprises senior managers stationed outside that city.

ABC Regional is designed to:

- Give a stronger voice to the one-third of Australians living outside the capital cities;
- Contribute to a sense of national identity and reflect Australia's diversity, in accordance with the ABC Charter; and
- Provide a response to the reduction in services by the commercial media sector in regional Australia, who cannot maintain their operations, as servicing these audiences is not economically sustainable.

The Division's actions have been fully in accordance with its strategy and its commitment to consulting widely with stakeholders.. Not one dollar has been withdrawn from the regional content budget—programming, scheduling and staffing changes have been designed to maximise content funding and the return for audiences within a rapidly-changing sector.

In fact, ABC Regional has increased its contest investment via the very successful *Back Roads* program aired over summer on Monday nights. *Back Roads*, which originates from the extensive community consultations, has built a consolidated audience averaging 1.19 million across the eight-part series. It was a national Top 10 program across the summer period and one of the ABC's best-performing debut programs of recent years. The ABC Chairman announced at the ABC Showcase in Canberra in early February that *Back Roads* would be renewed for a second season and was likely to be 'an enduring audience favourite in the years ahead'.

ABC Regional has 424 staff located in 48 regional locations, as well as in capital cities, producing content for highly-regarded programs like the *Country Hour*, *Landline* and *Australia All Over*.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The Division’s operational budget is \$52 million. However, this understates the extent of the ABC’s services and investment in serving rural and regional audiences. The Corporation notes the Committee’s focus is on ‘bringing the arts, news and other services to rural and regional Australia’. The “to” in that sentence is important. The ABC acknowledges that local content, especially news, produced in local communities by content-makers who understand their audiences and the issues that resonate with them, is crucial. This underpins the Regional Division’s footprint and the investment in staff and content.

However, as *Back Roads* demonstrates, the ABC is unique in its ability to use content produced across its many platforms and divisions (and from various production centres), and the knowledge it has of its audiences, to provide a rich source of programming and services to rural and regional Australia. And, as importantly, to use those same platforms to ensure that Australians in the major population centres are fully informed on what is occurring away from the big cities. *Landline*, the award-winning television documentary program that has become another essential component of ABC Regional’s output, also achieved significant ratings when aired over summer.

As this Committee would recognise from the current debate about media law reform, one of the key concerns harboured by regional politicians relates to the lack of visibility ‘the cities’ have about issues that concern their constituents. The ABC speaks to the cities about the bush as much as it does the reverse.

Therefore, in calculating the full level of investment the ABC makes in servicing rural and regional audiences, the full range of content and capital inputs must be considered. As described later in this submission, areas of the ABC other than the Regional Division provide content for, in and about regional Australia that must be included in any such calculation. Likewise, allowance must be made for the fact that regional audiences enjoy and consume the same national and state-wide content as other Australians. Further, the distribution and transmission infrastructure required to service far-flung communities is substantial – covering roughly 75 per cent of the Corporation’s \$200 million annual bill. Other support and service costs, must also be considered. The ABC has made an attempt to calculate the content component of the overall investment in services to regional audiences. Table 2 shows those approximate levels of investment.

**Table 2: Indicative ABC Investment in Rural and Regional Audiences**

	\$million	
Content	199	Includes ABC Regional’s \$52 million operational budget
Distribution and Transmission	151	
Property and equipment	12	
Support costs	12	HR, finance, audit, capital works, technology support, business operations and content services
Other corporate costs	13	Corporate costs, including Audience and Marketing and other corporate departments
<b>Total</b>	<b>387</b>	



## **ABC Regional content**

The content output of the Regional Division involves a range of activities, including local radio services, emergency broadcasting, rural programming, local news and user-generated content from regional areas.

### **Local radio and live production**

The ABC includes a diverse and wide-reaching Local Radio network, with content emanating from 46 centres across the country. Every one of the Division's locally-produced and presented radio programs are aired live, with the majority broadcast from 6.15 am through to 11.00 am each weekday, along with live news bulletins and regional state-wide drive-time programs in every state and the Northern Territory. It is estimated that in 2016, ABC Regional will broadcast an average of more than 972 hours of live local content each week.

In 2015, the ABC began audio streaming an additional 14 regional services, in addition to the two already underway.<sup>3</sup> The streams ensure more Australians can access radio online and on mobile via the ABC app, which delivers content to audiences wherever they may be. The Corporation is examining extending streaming to all regional networks within the next two years. In addition to live broadcasting, each centre maintains an ABC Local website showcasing interactive content from across the region, which allows the audience and staff to delve into community issues, events and conversations.

The ABC pioneered the use of local websites in the 1990s to provide communities with news and information created in, and relevant to, those areas. Whilst a lot of the current debate about protecting local content focuses on television broadcasting, the ABC believes that online and mobile platforms are an increasingly efficient and effective way of servicing local audiences. This was recognised in the Final Report of the Convergence Review in March 2012, which stated:

Online delivery of content provides for greater convenience for users. It also allows for the development of local content that is more closely tailored to the needs of individual Australians. Significantly, online content can also provide Australians with greater opportunities for greater interaction with content and a forum to exchange views.<sup>4</sup>

### **Emergency broadcasting**

In times of emergency, Australians turn to the ABC, especially those in regional Australia, who are more likely to feel the brunt of nature's savagery and who are more reliant on the national broadcaster for information and advice. As has been evident during the current

---

<sup>3</sup> The new services cover Alice Springs, Far North Queensland, Gold Coast, North-West Queensland, Southern Queensland, Western Queensland, Northern South Australia, Western South Australia, Northern Tasmania, Gippsland, the WA Goldfields, WA South West, the Kimberley and WA North West.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government. *Convergence Review: Final Report*, March 2012, p.84.

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

bushfire season, the ABC's commitment to, and resourcing of, emergency coverage remains paramount.

The Corporation trains employees in emergency broadcasting and has staff dedicated to monitoring the environment and working alongside emergency agencies to refine and develop communication systems. The ABC is the only radio broadcaster in rural and regional Australia undertaking this task and dedicating staff to it. It is an essential part of the Corporation's commitment to servicing rural and regional Australians. The ABC has a long history of assisting emergency agencies by broadcasting education material.

This includes the ABC Resilience campaign: a series of radio Community Service Announcements to encourage people to better plan and build resilience ahead of disasters. The ABC Emergency website ([abc.net.au/emergency](http://abc.net.au/emergency)) has been updated to better present resilience-related content online. The content includes a series of articles encouraging people to prepare and checklists (optimised for mobile viewing) for each type of emergency. There is also information about making communities more resilient and overcoming the impact of natural disasters. Stories about personal experiences and a history of previous disasters are presented alongside to help the audience understand the potential effects of a disaster and what's involved in recovery.

### **ABC Rural content**

The ABC has the largest network of specialist rural reporters in the world, with 35 reporters based in 35 regional offices. They are supported by a team of six national reporters based in various locations, and state-based teams of executive producers and presenters who mount the daily weekday *Country Hour*. As mentioned previously, this is Australia's longest-running radio program and has just celebrated its 70th birthday. ABC rural reporters provide daily *Rural Reports* on Local Radio in most regions and contribute local content to *The Country Hour* produced in each state and in the Northern Territory, as well as other programs across the Local Radio network. Their content also regularly travels to news and current affairs programs, other ABC radio networks (Radio National, Radio Australia) and widely online through various ABC websites and social media.

From July 2015, these teams were joined in the Rural & National Programs arm of ABC Regional by the award-winning TV reporters from *Landline*. Since 1991, *Landline* has been ABC TV's main vehicle for current affairs coverage of regional and rural issues and events and continues to build its audience. Other programs to come under the Rural and *Saturday Night Country* National Programs banner in 2015 included *Back Roads* and *Australia All Over*.

A key strength of ABC Rural is its ability to comprehensively cover local issues in any community and represent global issues to local audiences. ABC Rural reporters have led the field in covering major stories, including coverage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other trade negotiations, foreign investment in agriculture, and the impact of drought. In 2015, the ABC recognised the importance of national policy-making to regional audiences by creating a new Regional Affairs Reporter role, based at Parliament House, to work alongside the National Rural Reporter. No other media outlet has that extent of specialist knowledge in Canberra.



## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

As the Deputy Prime Minister remarked in late January 2016, technology is rapidly changing the way in which regional audiences consume news and information. The ABC is ahead of the curve, making the creation and coordination of rural content truly multi-platform. The *ABC Rural* website has tripled its average weekly page views in the past four years.

Content on rural issues is increasingly not only for rural Australians. A significant proportion of *Landline's* increased television audience in 2015 emanated from metropolitan markets – up 25 per cent each year since 2012. *ABC Rural* online and mobile content continues to attract regional and metropolitan audiences, given the broad and passionate interest in issues like land management, environmental protection, food-production systems, animal welfare and foreign investment.

### **Rural and regional ABC News content**

Alongside its ABC rural reporters, ABC Regional has a total of 88 news reporters working in 48 regional locations, as well as two home-based reporters, located in Port Augusta in South Australia and Nowra in NSW. Home-based reporting has proven to be a successful experiment in flexibility, opening the way for further expansions in regional coverage without the extensive costs associated with acquiring additional buildings.

ABC Regional news reporters work closely with the News division to provide stories for audiences on radio, online/mobile and the nightly television news. A number of locally-produced and presented bulletins are run each weekday across the country, while at the same time reporters file stories for state-wide bulletins.

The bulletin changes made by ABC Regional before Christmas, and now being implemented across the country, are designed to free-up reporters to deliver more local news and information during breakfast programming and throughout the day. This ensures that news and current affairs is delivered in real-time, as events unfold, rather than through static news bulletins.

In contrast to pre-recorded bulletins produced by other outlets, ABC regional reporters have the ability to establish a live audio link in the field to report breaking news. Twenty-eight stations are also equipped with video equipment that enables live video links from the field. This equipment supports filing footage for TV News and ABC News 24, as well as setting up live crosses into TV programs.

### **Audience-created content**

The ABC is a champion of audience-created or user-generated content (UGC), seeing this as an important way for audiences to participate more freely in local and national conversations. The ABC Open project, which is now part of ABC Regional, has provided an innovative and successful vehicle for local story-telling. ABC Open material is showcased on ABC platforms, adding colour, diversity and unique perspectives. ABC Open has proved important in highlighting the work of emerging regional performers and artists, and in encouraging local communities to improve their skills in writing, photography and digital production.

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

ABC Open projects encourage and support audience members to contribute digital content as text, photos, audio and video. Many projects have an arts focus or reveal personal stories of life in regional Australia.

The 'Makers and Creators' video project introduces the work of artists and artisans in regional Australia to audiences on ABC TV and iview. It generated 224 videos in a 12-month period. One of the stories, about an artist who turns ocean rubbish into sculptures of marine creatures, was viewed more than 90,000 times online and attracted viewers from around the world.

Other projects, like '500 Words' and 'Humans of Bundaberg', have showcased writing and photography from regional Australia. A number of projects were produced in partnership with state and local arts organisations, such as 'Artist by Artist', which helped celebrate the Queensland Arts Council's 50th anniversary. Another, called 'I am an artist, I come from the bush' helped Aboriginal artists share their personal experiences of station life in the Kimberley.

To date, ABC Open has helped just over 16,000 contributors tell more than 90,000 unique stories via the ABC's broadcast and digital platforms.

### **Engagement with regional communities**

The ABC's role in regional Australia goes beyond the content it creates. Its staff members live and work in the communities they serve. The trust and goodwill generated allows the ABC to participate in or inspire a range of activities each year that shine a light on the stories, events and issues in regional communities.

The Heywire program demonstrates the ABC's ability to bring Australians together; in this case, talented young Australians from remote areas who participate in a national competition to display their skills, creativity and raw potential. Each February, the winners are brought to Canberra for a week-long summit which includes meeting with policymakers from a range of departments and agencies to discuss issues that matter to them and their peers.

The Heywire competition itself acts as an artistic crucible. For example, Grafton local and 2010 ABC Heywire winner Alexandra Neill has been appointed artistic co-director of the National Young Writers Festival for the next two years.

Heywire demonstrates the ABC's deep commitment to regional Australia that extends far beyond the role of basic 'media coverage'. Heywire provides a unique platform that enables rural Australians to voice their opinions, and share their experiences, with policymakers and politicians- an opportunity that they would be unlikely to obtain without this program. The ABC has looked closely Heywire and plans to build on its success, establishing new partnerships with community-focused organisations, including local government.

### **Broader ABC regional audience investment**

ABC divisions do not operate as discrete entities, particularly in a converged digital era. Content is created or curated from within various parts of the ABC for distribution across an array of platforms for a diverse spread of audiences. Regional content is not quarantined to the Regional Division.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

*Four Corners*, for example, is headquartered in Sydney, but its investigative teams cover issues that extend well beyond that city. A detailed investigation may focus on a regional locale, a state-based issue, a national concern or an international controversy. (Regional investigations in the past two years have included *Hidden Harm*, examining the damage caused to babies by alcohol; *Iron Man*, a detailed look into the life of Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest; *Remote Hope*, a story of survival in remote Indigenous communities; *Ice Rush*, about the drug scourge sweeping through regional Australia; and *Battle for the Reef*, about the future of the Great Barrier Reef.)

Regardless of the origin of the story, or even the locale of the camera footage or interview, the content can be of major relevance to regional audiences. Similarly, ABC TV may contract with a Sydney-based independent production company for a documentary or drama series, but that content may actually be shot in, or be of specific relevance to, a regional audience.

*Australian Story*, widely acclaimed for its focus on personal narratives, reaches deep into regional Australia for its narratives. The last program for 2015 travelled to the Victorian city of Bendigo, to cover a local business identity, Margot Spalding, and her campaign to support a small Muslim community trying to build a mosque.

*Q&A* routinely travels beyond its Sydney production base to explore issues of relevance to local communities. Over the past three years, *Q&A* has been to Toowoomba, Ballarat, Canberra, Geelong, Arnhem Land, Rockhampton, Werribee and Launceston. While there are extra costs involved in these exercises, the program has committed to extending its presence in regional Australia in 2016.

The ABC's News, Radio and Television divisions create content which speaks directly to, and is derived from, regional Australia, including the *7PM News* and national current affairs programs, like *7.30* and *Four Corners*. These divisions also manage the platforms on which most of the ABC's regional content is accessed by audiences.

*Back Roads*, which aired on ABC Television over summer was a collaboration with ABC Television and ABC News.

A similarly collaborative process exists in the delivery of online and mobile services, which include the ABC News website, iview and the ABC Radio player and app. These services draw in regional content, ensuring that it is relevant to regional audiences, as well as to audiences across the country. The ABC News site offers 'localised' versions of stories for each state and highlights digital features produced by ABC regional offices.

iview provides a platform for on-demand video content and regularly features the work of ABC Open producers from across regional Australia. Strong local stories receive attention at state and national levels, while regional audiences receive relevant local content alongside the national content they also demand. As described above, the ABC is also active in regional communities through promoting and supporting user-generated content. This content creates a wealth of regional stories, photos and video that appears nationally on digital platforms as well as ABC TV and ABC News 24.

The cross-divisional 'On the Road' initiative in the Darling Downs in October 2015 showcased the region's stories and conversations nationally. The ABC's locally-based team played a large part in ensuring content from the region was shared more broadly across ABC platforms, with user-generated contributions also included as part of the ABC Open. National programs including *Q&A*, *Book Club*, *Compass*, *Studio 3* and *Gardening Australia* aired live or were pre-recorded in various locations across Toowoomba and Outside Broadcasts were held

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

on Radio. The week concluded with an ABC Open Day in the centre of Toowoomba where ABC News 24's *Breakfast* was broadcast live along with a variety of activities for the community to get involved.

ABC News recognises that its online and mobile sites provide an effective means of ensuring that rural and regional audiences are fully informed. The investment in state-based editions means audiences now have a greater mix of rich local news and information from their region, including interactive material, alongside the best of the national and international coverage. Engagement on those sites has increased markedly since the introduction of the local focus. ABC Rural stories and information are also now offered from a section on the ABC News front pages resulting in a significantly greater audience to that content. ABC News is now looking at more targeted regional feeds – allowing users in Townsville, for example, to get automatic access to a broad range of stories from North Queensland.

### ABC Radio

The ABC's extensive radio network provides a powerful demonstration of the Corporation's ability to service regional communities through rich, diverse local content and an appreciation of audience needs. While ABC Local Radio is the main focus, the four national networks (Radio National, NewsRadio, triple j and Classic FM) also play a key role in informing, educating and entertaining Australians outside the main population centres. They are each also concerned to source material from and about regional Australia not only to reflect a truer picture of the nation, but to inform metropolitan audiences on life beyond the suburbs.

Regional and rural issues are the subject of regular discussion on RN's influential *Breakfast* program and *Drive* programs. The *Breakfast* program's Queensland correspondent for example, travels regularly into regional areas to provide comprehensive reports on drought and other issues of concern, always featuring the voices and experience of local residents. In 2015, the network established a new position for a reporter in Western Australia, who now supplies a stream of material focused on regional and natural-resource issues into *Drive*, *Breakfast* and other programs where appropriate. The daily 'Afternoons' program features a weekly rural news segment and regularly features items from the extensive network of regional reporters.

There are also many instances of RN programs travelling to regional Australia. In late 2015, for example, the *Saturday Extra* program was hosted by Geraldine Doogue in Longreach, and featured local guests outlining the benefits and challenges of life in regional Queensland. Beyond the news and current affairs focus, the *Earshot* documentary program has been particularly committed to bringing a rural flavour to the daily 1100-1200 timeslot. During 2015, 35 programs took listeners 'into' the bush. This diverse selection included the story of the weather forecasters stationed on Willis Island (north of Cairns), a fond portrait of White Cliffs, and the story of the party of explorers who opened up the track from Normanton to Darwin.

The role of the radio networks is particularly relevant for the Committee's focus on live performances and the arts. Not only does ABC Radio cover regional performers, it gives them unrivalled access and exposure to national audiences.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The music network trio of triple j, triple j Unearthed and Double J all play an active part in stimulating and supporting live performance in regional Australia, through activities and vehicles like triplejuneearthed.com, Unearthed competitions to play at regional festivals, tour support for musicians, support of *Raw Comedy* and *Class Clowns*, *One Night Stand* and regional festival coverage on Double J.

triple j Unearthed, which is a unique digital channel devoted exclusively to uncovering new Australian music talent, has 19,230 artists from regional Australia registered on its website, with Canberra and Darwin supplying another 2,000. In the past two years, 203 tracks from regional artists on triplejuneearthed.com were broadcast to a national audience on triple j radio and 487 tracks from regional artists on triplejuneearthed.com were broadcast to a national audience on triple j Unearthed.

triple j supports up to 10 tours or festivals each month around the country. Taking in both festivals and artist tours, 37 of a possible 120 partnerships a year include regional towns. They are chosen based on line-up, area and the audience reached, with a view to a long-term relationship of serving that regional area. In 2015, triple j supported the following regional festivals:

- Mountain Sounds (Central Coast, NSW)
- Big Pineapple (Sunshine Coast)
- Groovin' the Moo (Bunbury, Bendigo, Oakland, Maitland, Canberra, Townsville)
- Splendour in the Grass (Byron Bay)
- Yours & Owls (Wollongong)
- This That (Formerly Fat as Butter, Newcastle)
- Festival of the Sun (Port Macquarie)
- Falls Festival (Marion Bay, Lorne, Byron Bay)
- Southbound (Bunbury)
- Unify (Tarwin)
- Party in the Paddock (TAS)

The One Night Stand is triple j's annual, free, all ages, drug-and-alcohol-free concert.<sup>5</sup> Past venues have included places like Dubbo, Mildura, Alice Springs, Tumby Bay, Dalby, and Sale. triple j has assessed the benefits to local communities of these concerts, using the 2014 Mildura concert as an example:

The initiative was of significant benefit to the Mildura community by: bringing a major cultural performance to a region; supporting local artists; 'exposing' the life and people of the region to a national audience; encouraging young people to get involved in their community in planning and putting on the event; providing a huge economic benefit to the region over the weekend of the concert and enhancing future tourism through promoting awareness of that particular region.

It should also be noted that triple j's youth current affairs program *Hack* actively seeks stories of particular relevance to the network's many regional listeners.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/events/onenightstand/apply/about/>.

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

RN programming often features performers from outside the main population centres and also provides a platform to bring international acts closer to rural and regional audiences. An *Earshot* program from December 2015 had musician and pilot John Morrison flying world-class violinist Ian Cooper and virtuoso Ambre Hammond around the top end of Australia. Another RN program, *Soundproof*, featured a NSW Northern Rivers artist Jay-Dea Lopez.

ABC Classic FM provides Australia with its only dedicated classical musical channel capable of serving both city and regional audiences. It is also the leading national venue for Australian classic music performances.

Classic FM's regional coverage has included:

- Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Townsville. Live and recorded concert broadcasts every year in July and August.
- Musica Viva Australia: Huntington Music Festival (Mudgee, NSW). Live and recorded concert broadcasts every year in November.
- Port Fairy Music Festival, Victoria. Concerts recorded for broadcast in October 2014.
- Launceston: two Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra broadcasts per year from the Albert Hall, Launceston.
- Bangalow Music Festival, NSW. Coverage in 2014, concerts recorded for broadcast.
- Shepparton, Victoria. Annual broadcast of the final concert of the Australian National Piano Award.
- Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music.
- Coverage in 2015 of the opening a new, privately funded concert venue, Ngeringa Cultural Centre, near Mt Barker in South Australia.
- Some coverage of music events staged in Albany, WA, as part of the annual Perth International Arts Festival (2014).
- A 60-minute radio feature in 2014 about the history and activities of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra.

## ABC Television

ABC Television operates primarily as a national service that aims to reflect back to Australia the breadth and diversity of the country. The Division categorises 'regional production' as that occurring outside its main production centres in Sydney and Melbourne. Nonetheless, ABC TV has done extensive work to deliver content that reflects rural and regional diversity, both in terms of the subject matter of its content and the physical location of its production.

Since 2011/12, ABC TV has commissioned 184 projects in Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the ACT, resulting in over one thousand hours of content and \$131 million in production expenditure in these states and territories. Regional programs have included the Indigenous comedy *8MMM* (NT); the arts documentary *Bespoke*, filmed around Australia; the epic drama series *Anzac Girls*, filmed in South Australia; as well as digital-first initiatives such as *Wastelander Panda* (SA), *Noirhouse* (TAS) and *The Daters* (SA).

ABC TV was heavily involved in the 2015 'On the Road' exercise in Toowoomba. The week featured a live Q&A, an episode of *The Book Club* filmed before a live Toowoomba audience, as



## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

well as episodes of *Compass*, *Catalyst*, *Gardening Australia*, *ABC3* and *Giggle & Hoot*. The ABC is exploring another 'On the Road' series of programming for 2016.

The ABC is committed to broadcasting the Australia Day celebrations and ANZAC Day commemorations in each state and territory.

Working with the independent sector, the ABC has broadcast dramas like *The Code* which was filmed in the outback, Parliament House and the cities; *Glitch*, which was filmed in regional Victoria; *The Doctor Blake Mysteries* in Ballarat; and the Indigenous family series *The Gods of Wheat Street*, which was filmed and set in Casino, NSW. Factual series like *Outback ER*, *Jillaroo School*, *the Great Barrier Reef*, and *Flying Miners*, explore issues in regional Australia that are relevant to all Australians. ABC's Children's content, including *Play School*, *3on3*, *Bushwacked!* and *Behind the New* contain significant regional coverage.

An internal survey conducted by the ABC of ABC Television's commissioned programs broadcast in 2014, found that 60 per cent of those titles carried a regional storyline and/or were partially shot outside of Sydney and Melbourne (a full list of these programs is in Appendix A).

ABC Television's regular programming is committed to reflecting the diversity of Australia's community:

### **Compass**

In 2014 and 2015, *Compass* covered stories on a local GP in Coonabarabran; the Country Women's Association in Crookwell and Morrisett NSW; an ambitious canoe adventure on the River Murray run by St Luke's Anglicare from Albury Wodonga to help people with mental health issues; and the story behind a country town Anglican farewell in Kandos for a much loved local, and a no-frills Muslim funeral for an asylum seeker.

In 2016, *Compass* will feature a series on the effect of Chaplains on prisoners' lives in regional Australia; the effect of domestic violence in rural Australia, and the story of an extraordinary correspondence that documents a Benedictine monk's personal insights and growing affection for the Western Australian bush and the Indigenous people he came to love in New Norcia.

### **Catalyst**

The ABC's weekly science program *Catalyst*, broadcast on Tuesdays at 8pm, also contains stories from around Australia. In 2015, the program covered stories including:

- Birdsong in northern NSW, Yarra Ranges Vic, Serendip Sanctuary Geelong;
- 'Parrots vs Possums' in southern Tasmania;
- The problems of tick allergies, shot on the South Coast;
- 'On Gluten' in Gunnedah;
- 'A life Without Males', shot in Wirraminna Station and Eulo;
- 'Toorale Man' in Bourke, Far West NSW;
- Antarctic Acidification from Casey station (Antarctica) and Hobart; and
- Story on Lead shot in Boolaroo and Bourke, NSW.

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

In 2014, *Catalyst* covered stories on coral trout in the Whitsundays; the wind and weather warnings on the South Coast and Jindabyne; and organ failure in the Hunter region. Stories are planned in Townsville and the Great Barrier Reef in 2016.

### **Gardening Australia**

The ABC's long-running *Gardening Australia* program explores the diversity of Australia's landscape, gardens and gardeners.

In 2014, the program travelled to the Darling Downs, Surfers paradise, Benowa, Woombye in Queensland; Porongurup in the Great Southern region of WA, Dalwallinu in the Wheatbelt region, Western Australia; Pennyroyal, Newbury, Merebein, Gippsland in Victoria; Eggs and Bacon Bay and Glengarry in Tasmania; Alice Springs and Santa Teresa in the NT; Quorn, Cape Jervis and Young in the South West Slopes region of South Australia; Ebenezer, Jervis Bay National Park, Tyagarah, Byron Bay and Bodella in NSW.

In 2015, the program covered stories from Heskett in the Victorian Macedon Ranges; Booderee National Park in Jervis Bay, NSW; Didillibah on the Sunshine Coast, QLD; Beraming in the Blue Mountains, NSW; Montville on the Sunshine Coast, QLD; Romaine in Northern Tasmania; Toodyay in the Wheatbelt region of WA; Gingin in WA and two episodes in Renmark – Riverland area in South Australia.

### **ABC Children**

Programs filmed in regional locations included *Bushwhacked*, *Blue Zoo* (Coffs Harbour), *Nowhere Boys* (regional Victoria) and *Prisoner Zero* (NSW Central Coast). In production or planned are *Bushwhacked Bugs!* (two episodes in the Blue Mountains and Central Coast), *Tomorrow When the War Began* (regional Victoria), *Year 12 Diaries* (across Australia) and *This is Me* (two/three of the episodes and children featured are from regional Australia).

As of January this year, the ABC has committed to eight titles with the external sector with production outside Sydney and Melbourne. These include the eight-part comedy *Rosehaven* in rural Tasmania; *DAFUQ?*, a satire on VICE-like reporters being filmed in WA; and the documentary *Blue Water Empire: The History of the Torres Straits* produced in Queensland.

The ABC is working in partnership with the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) on its 'digital first' initiative for South Australian filmmakers to create content for national distribution and to encourage local production in South Australia. This initiative seeks to commission projects with grants of up to \$100,000 across a range of genre areas from factual, comedy, drama, arts, entertainment and Indigenous divisions providing assessment and commissioning support for distribution on iView.

The ABC also launched the Art Bites documentary initiative with Screen Australia, SAFC, ScreenWest, Screen NT, Film Vic, Screen Tasmania and Screen QLD that calls for proposals for short-form Arts web series by early-career filmmakers. First-round applications have just closed and are being assessed. Across Australia, 90 applications were received, which highlights the ABC's commitment to servicing all of its audiences.

The joint initiative, *Eureka*, between the ABC, Film Victoria and the Australian Children's Television Foundation is also seeking applications for new short-form live action TV series for

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

children aged between eight and 12 years to be available on ABC iview, ABC3's YouTube channel and possibly on ABC3 broadcast.

In 2014, the ABC and Film Victoria announced a joint Drama and Comedy Initiative, committing to up to 12 television productions. From this \$4.5 million package resulted projects including *Sammy J & Randy in Rickett's Lane*, the third series of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *Glitch*.

The ABC continues to explore similar initiatives with state arts and cultural bodies.

### ABC arts programming

Section 6(1)(c) of the ABC Act specifies as one of the functions of the Corporation 'to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia.'

The objective of the Corporation's arts strategy is closely aligned to the ABC's Charter requirement to reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community.

In this financial year, ABC Arts will air: David Stratton's *The Story of Australian Cinema*, which is filmed all over Australia; the second series of *Stop Laughing... This is Serious*, which features regional content and talent from across Australia; and *Streets of Your Town*, a series on the aesthetics of our suburbs.

A number of one-off documentaries will feature artists or locations in regional Australia. They include *Girl Asleep*, *Meet the Mavericks*, *Spear*, *Kev Carmody: Songman*, *Michelle's Story*, *Particia Piccinini: A Dark Fairytale*, *Play to Win*, *One Shot* and *Glenn Murcutt*.

Under development in Perth is a music documentary series that expands into a national music arts campaign that follows primary school children as they are given instruments and then learn, play and experience classical music for the first time. It will focus on a school in a disadvantaged, low socio-economic area that does not have a school musical program.

In 2015, the ABC launched the Arts Channel on iview and 2016 will see content commissioned for the channel with a regional focus:

- *Slam TV*: shot all over Australia, including Byron Bay and Queensland; *Slam* is a six episodes × five minute short-form, multi-platform documentary series showcasing inspiring and challenging contemporary poets/writers and performers exploring their diverse cultural backgrounds, creative influences and the complex topics explored in their work. Designed for online sharing and social media, the series has the potential to grow into a regular series featuring leading voices the Australian poetry, hip hop and spoken word culture.
- *Arts News*: various regional content, e.g. Perth Festival.
- *On Assignment*: shot in WA; is a 4 × 6 minute photography series that takes audiences into the field with some of the best shooters in Australia to find out how they capture the perfect image. Using the popular 'how to' YouTube format as a starting point, *On Assignment* is an exclusive iview Arts Channel commission that will hook audiences who have a passion for a photography and a desire to learn the tricks of the trade. All the while exploring the work and lives of some of Australia's leading artists.
- *24 Frames*: artists from all over Australia, three years in the making, *24 Frames* is a new collection of short dance films made collaboratively by 24 artists, dancers,

## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

choreographers and filmmakers. Across the 12 episodes, we see contemporary dance in all its forms come to life on screen.

In the financial years 2011/12 to 2014/15, ABC Arts commissioned 26 projects that were produced outside of Sydney and Melbourne.

ABC Arts works in conjunction with a number of arts organisations around the country, including the Perth Festival, the Adelaide Film Festival and the Museum of New and Modern Art in Hobart. The Corporation is also creating an Arts Reference Panel to provide expert advice to the ABC Board, and assist in the development of a new pan-ABC Arts strategy. Panel members will consist of arts industry leaders from across Australia, including regional areas. Regional Arts leaders invited to participate include Dalisa Pigram from the Marrugeku Dance Co. in Broome, Warwick Thornton from the Northern Territory, Stephen Williamson from the Araluen Arts Centre in Alice Springs, and Scott Rankin from Tasmania.

### **Commitment to rural and regional Australia**

The ABC is acutely aware of commentary in recent months about the extent of its commitment to servicing regional audiences and an alleged 'Sydney-centric' bias in decision-making. There are also assertions that the Corporation should restructure and redirect funding to address market failure issues in regional media.

The argument that the ABC can and should simply redirect funds away from 'non-core' digital activities in Sydney to address commercial broadcasting market failure pockets in rural and regional Australia is fundamentally flawed, and betrays a lack of understanding about history, production, programming, budgeting and the ABC Charter.

Despite claims to the contrary, the ABC has never been, and nor will it ever be, a 'market failure broadcaster.' It was created alongside commercial broadcasters in the 1930s to provide a range of quality programming and to maximise diversity within the Australian media sector. The ABC has and continues to fulfil its Charter obligations, while maintaining its relevance to a diverse audience, despite a raft of changes within the media sector.

The ABC Charter requires the Corporation to provide 'innovative and comprehensive broadcasting and digital services of a high standard' and to broadcast programs that 'contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community.' The ABC has a responsibility to provide a balance between broadcasting programs of wide appeal and those of a specialised nature.

The ABC believes it does a good job in balancing these obligations, particularly within the constraints of a reduced budget. Independent survey results confirm the audience has a similar view. As the 2015 Annual Report documents, the annual Newspoll *ABC Appreciation Survey* shows that a large majority of Australians (84 per cent) believe the national broadcaster performs a valuable role.<sup>6</sup> A similarly large majority believe it is doing a 'good job' satisfying its Charter obligations.

---

<sup>6</sup> Newspoll. *ABC Appreciation Survey*, May 2015.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Nowhere is the ABC more appreciated than in regional Australia, with 88 per cent believing it provides a valuable service to the community.<sup>7</sup> 80 per cent of Australians believe the ABC does a 'good job' covering country/regional issues, compared with 42 per cent who claim the same of commercial media. This figure increases to 82 per cent among Australians living in country and regional areas, compared with 50 per cent who feel the same of commercial media.

Moreover, the community understands the financial pressures and constraints that the ABC is under, and the need for additional funding to allow the ABC to increase its regional investment. Independent polling commissioned by the Australia Institute in 2015 found strong support across the nation for increased ABC funding to improve regional services.<sup>8</sup>

Those survey results are driven by a community belief that even in an age of 'media plenty' the ABC performs a valuable role in creating, commissioning and curating content, and in providing innovative platforms and format for the audience to consume it. Moreover, amid the plethora of digital material available, the ABC continues to provide a safe, trusted destination and brand for accessing information and entertainment.

Assertions that the Corporation can easily redirect large parts of its funding to address regional market failure (on the grounds that capital city markets are less dependent upon ABC services) are inaccurate, unsustainable, and would, if implemented, disenfranchise large sections of the ABC audience. No less than regional audiences, capital-city audiences value the unique and innovative services the ABC provides as part of its Charter obligations. These arguments also ignore the fact that a substantial portion of ABC content emanating from ABC capital-city offices is of great relevance to and valued by regional audiences.

Those arguing for a massive internal shift of funding have been reluctant, for obvious reasons, to detail the ABC services they believe should be scrapped to finance the extra regional investment.

The ABC Act states that an independent ABC Board has ultimate responsibility for deciding how the national broadcaster's funds are distributed. Parliaments have traditionally resisted attempts to tie the Board's hands, or to amend the Act and Charter to require specific programming or production outcomes as it undermines the integrity and original intent of the Act. The ABC submits that this remains the best process for audiences and the broader Australian community. Board members are cognizant of their need to bring local issues to the table, but to ultimately make decisions in accordance with the ABC Act. Section 8 of the Act requires the Board 'to ensure the functions of the Corporation are performed efficiently and with the maximum benefit to the people of Australia, while maintaining the ABC's independence and integrity'.

The ABC was created within a dual media system, where public and private companies operate within the one sector, and believes that this remains the best way of delivering local diversity to audiences, particularly in rural and regional Australia.

The Committee's inquiry takes place against a backdrop of dramatic changes in the media landscape. Arguably, the media industry has been the sector most disrupted by convergence

---

<sup>7</sup> Newspoll. *ABC Appreciation Survey*, May 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The Australia Institute. "Heartland – Why the bush needs its ABC", September 2015, <http://www.tai.org.au/downloadpopup/nojs/11830>.

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

and new digital technologies and that within that sector, it has been regional markets that have been hardest hit.

Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) research suggests that more than 1,500 jobs have been lost from regional commercial news services in recent years. In just the past 12 months, while the new ABC Regional division has been established, WIN TV has announced the closure of its Mackay and Mildura newsrooms, there have been job losses at Fairfax's Newcastle and Hunter operations, and the Prime Media Group has confirmed the loss of editorial positions in Tamworth and Wagga Wagga.

The ABC recognises the importance of a diverse media sector in rural and regional Australia and is keen to ensure a plurality of voices outside the capital cities. The Corporation has advanced some ideas about how it can assist audiences and commercial and community media in the regions.

Those ideas, which are relevant to the current debate about media law reform, include strategic investment in regional locations, expanding the ABC footprint and creating new programs that focus on regional Australia, as well as a capacity to share raw news content with other media.

Additional funding would enable the ABC to recruit and deploy more than 100 extra video journalists, program makers, rural reporters and digital producers. Regional radio programs would be extended and new television and radio programs created.

In light of its funding constraints, it is unrealistic to expect the ABC to provide new services in regional markets beyond those already resourced, or to totally restructure its approach to remedy market gaps.

For example, there have been suggestions in recent weeks that the ABC should be mandated to provide local television news bulletins in each local area. In fact, since the 1990s, the ABC has been using its local online sites to provide extensive news coverage. Stories generated by local reporters are fed into local radio bulletins and into the state-based television news bulletins that have been a mainstay of the ABC's local television coverage since the 1950s.

The Corporation's approach—incorporating local stories into news bulletins that also contain state, national and international stories—is consistent with the ways in which audiences make use of media. The ABC's collaborative research project ABC Spoke, which investigated personalisation and localisation of news and information, found that people do not want local news and information in isolation.<sup>9</sup> They instead prefer it to be included in a feed with national and international stories. Further, people's definition of 'local' content varies widely.

Expanding to 58 local television news bulletins each day would require a massive capital and staffing investment. At present, ABC TV operates in 15 discreet markets, providing separate state and metro services in each state and territory, other than the ACT, which requires only one. Localised bulletins would require new studio fit-outs, additional staff, extra satellite and play-out costs, and new video fibre links. They would entail a significant and costly reconfiguration of the transmission and distribution networks used to deliver the Corporation's television services around the country.

---

<sup>9</sup> ABC R&D. 'News, Place & Relevance', White Paper, 2015,  
<http://rd.abc.net.au/assets/downloads/ABCDN-NewsPlaceRel.pdf>.



## ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

This massive investment would run counter to audience trends and the ability of media companies to use new digital services to provide more efficient and effective ways of servicing those audiences. As the Departmental 'ABC and SBS Efficiency Study' noted:

Audience demand appears to be shifting away from the linear experience of the past towards a preference for on demand content accessed through multiple devices. While the traditional broadcast model is proving more robust than some predicted, the national broadcasters are likely to face pressure to make their content available on a wider range of devices and to plan for content to be increasingly provided to consumers on demand. The challenge for national broadcasters is to rebalance their resources whilst continuing to meet expectations of providing traditional services.<sup>10</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The ABC submits that through its history, its footprint and its activities, no other broadcasting organisation has as deep an understanding of and affinity with rural and regional Australia. This submission demonstrates the effectiveness of the new Regional Division in developing strategies to make better use of existing resources to service its audiences. And it shows how the ABC makes good use of its creativity and skills outside that Division to deliver on its Charter roles.

At a time of rapid and extensive change in the Australian media landscape, that dependence on the ABC, and the need to resource it properly for the task ahead, becomes vital.

---

<sup>10</sup> Department of Communications. 'ABC and SBS Efficiency Study: Draft Report', April 2015, p.7

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

**APPENDIX A**

**ABC TV Programs with a Story Set in Regional Australia, or Fully or Partially Set in Regions, Broadcast in 2014**

GENRE	PROGRAM TITLE	DUR
ARTS	SKULLBONE PLAINS	1 × 30'
	SOUNDS LIKE HOME	1 × 30'
	THE REAL MARY POPPINS	1 × 60'
	WAR PAINT: THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GEORGE GITTOES	1 × 30'
	THE LOST TOOLS OF HENRY TOKE	20 × 5'
	SHOW ME THE MAGIC	1 × 54'
	THE KING SUN: JOHN OLSEN - A PORTRAIT AT 85	1 × 30'
	I WANT TO DANCE BETTER AT PARTIES	1 × 30'
	HELEN GARNER'S MONKEY GRIP	1 × 30'
	FIRST PERSON KODACHROME	1 × 30'
	BIRDMAN: THE ART OF WILLIAM T COOPER	1 × 30'
	TENDER	1 × 73'
	HANNAH GADSBY'S OZ	3 × 30'
	GIRT BY SEA	1 × 60'
	THE BOY CASTAWAYS	1 × 90'
	ART + SOUL	3 × 60'
	OUTBACK CHOIR	1 × 60'
CYBER DREAMING	1 × 30'	
COMEDY	NOIRHOUSE SERIES 2	6 × 5'-10'
	UPPER MIDDLE BOGAN SERIES 2	8 × 30'
	TIMOTHY	1 × 30'
	PLEASE LIKE ME SERIES 2	10 × 30'
DRAMA	THE CODE SERIES 1	6 × 57'
	THE DOCTOR BLAKE MYSTERIES SERIES 2	8 × 57'
	THE BROKEN SHORE	1 × 110'
	JACK IRISH: DEAD POINT	1 × 100'
	WASTELANDER PANDA	6 × 10'
	PARER'S WAR	1 × 100'
	ANZAC GIRLS	6 × 57'
	TIM WINTON'S THE TURNING	1 × 90'
	HEALING	1 × 114'
ENTERTAINMENT	THE CHECKOUT SERIES 2	20 × 30'
	KITCHEN CABINET SERIES 4	7 × 30'
	JULIA ZEMIRO'S HOME DELIVERY SERIES 2	9 × 30'
	GOOD GAME	43 × 30' & 2 × 60'

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

	RAGE (VARIOUS)	52 × 720'; 52 × 420'
	ONE NIGHT STAND MILDURA 2014	?
FACTUAL	THE WAR THAT CHANGED US	4 × 57'
	OPENING SHOT/THE AGONY OF ECSTASY	1 × 31'
	THE DREAMHOUSE	6 × 30'
	HELLO BIRDY	6 × 30'
	OPENING SHOT/SKIMPY	1 × 30'
	FLYING MINERS	3 × 60'
	GAYCRASHERS	1 × 32'
	HEAD FIRST	5 × 60'
	SHARK GIRL	1 × 60'
	OPENING SHOT: DEFENDANT 5	1 × 28'
	BOFFIN BUILDER AND BOMBARDIER	8 × 10' OR 1 × 30'
	GARDENING AUSTRALIA	36 × 30'
	COMPASS	24 × 27'30'
	CATALYST	24 × 30'
	COUNTDOWN: DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR	2 × 60'
	BOOMTOWN	6 × 30'
	DEVIL ISLAND	6 × 30'
	FAMILY CONFIDENTIAL SERIES 3	6 × 30'
	THE DATERS SERIES 1	21 × 10'
	WHEN THE BEATLES DROVE US WILD	1 × 60'
	SAVE YOUR LIFE TONIGHT	6 × 30'
	OPENING SHOT: CRACK UP	2 × 29'
	Q&A	44 × 60'
	TRIGGER POINT	2 × 57'
	LIFE AT 9	2 × 60'
	ENIGMA MAN: A STONE AGE MYSTERY	1 × 57'
	ONCE MY MOTHER	1 × 73'
INDIGENOUS	MYSTERY ROAD	1 × 118'
	BLOWN AWAY	1 × 57'
	THE GODS OF WHEAT STREET	6 × 60'
	WILD KITCHEN WITH CLAYTON DONOVAN	3 × 30'
	OUTSIDE CHANCE	?
SPORT & EVENTS	NTFL 2014	18 × 120'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH ACT 2014	1 × 120'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH SA 2014	1 × 210'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH TAS 2014	1 × 90'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH QLD 2014	1 × 150'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH NT 2014	1 × 90'
	ANZAC DAY MARCH WA 2014	1 × 120'
	GOLF: AUSTRALIAN LADIES MASTERS 2014	1 × 268'; 1 × 267'
	FOOTBALL INT'L JPN VS AUS	1 × 150'

ABC SUBMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

	CENTENARY OF ANZAC ALBANY	1 × 120'
	BASKETBALL MEN'S INTERNATIONAL (Aus v China)	1 × 151'; 1 × 126'; 2 × 120'
	AOTY NOMINEE PROFILES 2014	1 × 30'
	AOTY AWARDS 2014	1 × 60'
	WAFL 2014	25 × 90'
	WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA VS BRAZIL	1 × 120'
	W-LEAGUE 2014	14 × 117'; 1 × 143'; 1 × 168'
	WNBL 2014	20 × 117'; 1 × 147'; 2 × 90'
	NATIONAL FLAG RAISING AND CITIZENSHIP	1 × 66'
	AUSTRALIA'S PARALYMPIANS 2014 (PROFILES)	1 × 18'
CHILDRENS	BUSHWHACKED SERIES 2	13 × 24'
	BIG TED'S BIG ADVENTURE SERIES 1	20 × 3'
	PLAY SCHOOL	45 × 27'
	ABC3 SMACKDOWN GAMES (2014) SERIES 6	1 × 17'
	BTN	35 × 24'
	MY24	13 × 24'
	BLUE ZOO	22 × 25'30''
	RAWR	26 × 3'5''