



Australian Government

**Australian Government response to the Senate
Environment and Communications Legislation
Committee report:**

**Into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014**

March 2018

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Overview

The Australian Government notes the report by the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (the Committee) into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014 (the Local Content Bill).

On 4 December 2014, the Senate referred the Local Content Bill to the Committee for inquiry and report. The Bill seeks to amend the Charter of the ABC to include requirements for the production and dissemination of local content. The Bill is also in response to a 'centralisation' of the ABC in recent years, as many of its state and territory based production, journalism and broadcasting services have been rolled into the main offices in Sydney and Melbourne.

Australian Government response

The Australian Government's response to the inquiry and report into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014 is set out in detail below.

Recommendation 1:

1.76 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government establish a mechanism to enable the transparent and comprehensive reporting of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation against its Charter.

Recommendation 2:

1.82 The committee recommends that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014 not be passed.

The Government **does not support** recommendation 1, however **supports** recommendation 2.

The ABC is already required through its annual reporting process to measure how it meets its Charter obligations. The reporting measure obligations are met through a range of key performance indicators as set out in the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (the ABC Act), the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act), PGPA Rules and the ABC Corporate Plan, providing the Government with transparency in how the ABC has appropriately applied the funds with which it has been provided.

Since the Report was tabled, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Rural and Regional Measures) Bill 2017 (Rural and Regional Measures Bill) was introduced into the Senate. This Bill will ensure regional communities are provided for in the functions of the Corporation and through representation on the ABC Board, as well as requiring specific reporting obligations in relation to regional jobs and news and information services.

If successful, the Rural and Regional Measures Bill will provide additional annual reporting requirements that will oblige the ABC to provide statistics on the number of individuals employed in regional areas and metropolitan areas separately. These statistics will include individuals employed as journalists or support staff. There is also a requirement to report on the total number of hours of local or regional news bulletins broadcast during the reporting period.