



THE SENATE

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Senate committee commences inquiry into ABC Rural and Regional Advocacy Bill**

The Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee will examine a proposal to promote regional news services and journalism in rural and regional Australia.

The Committee's inquiry will consider a private senator's bill introduced by Nationals Senator for Victoria, Senator Bridget McKenzie. If passed, the bill would amend the ABC's Charter to require the ABC to provide broadcasting programs that reflect the geographical diversity of the Australian community.

The bill would also require the ABC to allocate staff and resources on rural and regional Australia and to foster an environment conducive to the promotion of regional journalism.

In addition, the ABC would be required to ensure that regional stations are staffed appropriately during natural disasters and emergencies so that production can support community safety while complying with employee health and safety standards.

Committee Chair Senator Linda Reynolds today said that the Committee "is looking forward to hearing from people living in rural and regional communities about how the ABC can best serve their needs".

"I encourage everyone who is interested in how the ABC can promote journalistic excellence throughout all of Australia to write to the Committee" Senator Reynolds said.

The Committee is inviting written submissions on Senator McKenzie's bill. Submissions from interested individuals and organisations are invited by Friday, 26 February 2016.

The text of the bill and further information about the Committee's inquiry, including how to lodge a submission, is available on the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/senate\\_ec](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_ec).

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**For media comment**, please contact:

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