

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates February 2017**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Question No: 101**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Page 97, 28/02/2017**

**Topic: Balance and weight across Outlets - Lessons learnt**

**Senator Reynolds, Linda asked:**

**Senator HUME:** Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Could you just take on notice with that, again, what editorial policies allowed that to occur in terms of the lack of weight across your programs and what lessons you have learnt. You have acknowledged that it was not right, so could you take on notice what lessons you have learnt to try to make sure that you do get more balance and weight across your various outlets.

**Mr Sunderland:** I will happily do that.

**Answer:**

Editorial decisions regarding which stories are selected for broadcast, the order of broadcast and the extent of reporting are appropriately made by each program team. This level of autonomy ensures that story selections are made in consideration of the particular audience and program brief.

The comments made by Keysar Trad on *The Bolt Report* on the evening of 22 February 2017, were identified as a newsworthy story by a number of ABC news outlets, including ABC NewsRadio. However, as reported by the ABC's *Media Watch* program, the comments were not selected as a story by other ABC news programs, including the 7pm bulletin, 7.30 AM, PM or *Lateline*.

One of the contributing factors to this decision was the prominence of other major stories at that time, including the Fair Work decision on penalty rates, the resignation of Ahmed Fahour as Chief Executive Officer of Australia Post and the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Nonetheless, ABC News management acknowledge that the story was not given sufficient coverage across the suite of ABC news programs. The program teams have each discussed the matter as part of their regular editorial processes.