

**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: 128**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 14/03/2017**

**Topic: Performing arts**

**Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:**

1. Over the last three years, has there been a net reduction in the number of ABC recordings of performances by Australian performing arts organisations?
  - (a) If so, why?
  - (b) Are there plans to reduce the number of these recordings in future?
2. Over the last three years, has there been a net reduction in the number of direct broadcasts on Classic FM (that is, performances broadcast on Classic FM in real time) of music performed by Australian performing arts organisations?
  - (a) If so, why?
  - (b) Are there plans to reduce the number of these direct broadcasts in future?
3. What impact does a reduction in the quantity of broadcasts have on the performing arts ecosystem in Australia?
4. What impact does a reduction in the amount of curated, specialist music programming have on the quality of music programming in Australia?
5. How can the ABC be said to be fulfilling its Charter if it reduces the number of recordings and direct broadcasts of performing arts organisations?
6. What are the key elements of the Service Level Agreements between the ABC and Australia's six state symphony orchestras?
7. What is the ABC doing to realise the value of these Service Level Agreements?

**Answer:**

1. In 2014, Classic FM reduced its number of live recordings from approximately 600 to approximately 300 each year.
  - (a) This is because of the 600 recordings being made, up to 50 per cent were not broadcast due to a lack of available airtime. Now that this number has been reduced, every recording that Classic FM makes is scheduled for broadcast.
  - (b) There are no immediate plans to change the number of live recordings by the ABC. 300 have been planned for 2017, as per previous years.

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2. Direct live broadcasts on Classic FM have been reduced by approximately 50 per cent from levels in 2014.
  - (a) This reduction is primarily because weekday evening concerts that were previously broadcast live are now recorded by Classic FM and presented at peak audience times during the day and at weekends.
  - (b) The number of direct live broadcasts varies from year to year, depending on the concert scheduling of the major classical music organisations around the country.
3. As outlined above, the ABC has no immediate plans to change the number of live recordings it makes nor the number of broadcasts of those recordings.
4. The ABC is conscious of the integral role it has in the promotion of the musical arts and has increased its coverage of music and specialist musical genres over the past 5 years, with the introduction of Double J, ABC Jazz, ABC Country, triple j Unearthed and Classic 2. All of these services have curated, presented programs across their programming schedule.
5. The ABC fulfils its Charter obligations to the performing arts across multiple services, including ABC Radio music networks, ABC TV and digital only content.
6. The Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the ABC and Australia's six state symphony orchestras permit the ABC to record and broadcast concerts for no fee and guarantees ABC with access to record. The SLAs set out the base broadcast rights for radio and digital platforms, including exchange arrangements with international classical radio networks.
7. The ABC engages with all of the orchestras to ensure that the Service Level Agreements achieve the best outcome for the audience.