

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: 93

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 83, 28/02/2017

Topic: NT Shortwave – Stakeholders consulted

Senator McCarthy, Malrindirri asked:

Senator McCARTHY: When did the consultation that you say took place commence? If that decision was made in the first week of December, when did the ABC consult, as it says it did, in the Northern Territory?

Ms Guthrie: Following the decision, we very much reached out to our listeners and they were provided with notice of the change.

Senator McCARTHY: So you consulted after you made the decision.

Ms Guthrie: In addition, we did consult with particular stakeholders before the decision was made, as part of—

Senator McCARTHY: Who were they?

Ms Guthrie: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator McCARTHY: When did that take place?

Ms Guthrie: Again, I did not have these specific decisions. I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The ABC's decision to terminate the Northern Territory shortwave services was based on internal consultation and analysis of relevant data, including coverage footprints of the various ABC radio platforms available in the Northern Territory, the cost of maintenance of the shortwave services, reliability of those services, shortwave listener feedback to the ABC, and audience trends regarding declining listenership for shortwave radio broadcasts. The research was facilitated by work conducted by L.E.K. Consulting.

The ABC's assessment was that considering the small number of regular shortwave listeners and the availability of ABC Northern Territory Local Radio on other platforms, that the funds used to maintain the shortwave services could be more effectively invested elsewhere in the transmission network.