

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 13

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Local Content

Senator Xenophon asked:

In the period between 2 September – 5 December 2013, the percentage of the origin of stories appearing on 7.30 (Monday-Thursday) in NSW, ACT and Victoria combined was 83.8 per cent. In the same period, the percentage of the origin of stories appearing on Lateline in NSW, ACT and VIC combined was 93.3 per cent.

1. How often does the ABC monitor discrepancies in coverage between states on these programs? Does the ABC monitor origin of news and current affairs stories across all programs?
2. Is the ABC reviewing allocation of resources and policies for these programs to address the discrepancies in equal coverage of states and territories across the country?

Answer:

1. The ABC does not set regional quotas regarding coverage for national television news and current affairs programs. These programs are broadcast to all Australians and feature topics and stories that have national appeal or relevance. The perceived discrepancy in the representation of particular states is the result of a range of factors, including judgements of news value and the location in which newsworthy events have occurred.
2. National television programs are only part of the ABC's wide-ranging news and current affairs service. It also includes state-based current affairs programs, state-based 7pm TV News, regionally-generated radio news and extensive local radio services. The ABC has made an increased commitment to local news coverage with the introduction of online 'State Editions'. These websites provide audiences with integrated and relevant local, national and international news and information in one site.