Question No: 40

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 30, 27/05/2015

Topic: Monitoring impartiality and balance with radio stations

Senator McGrath, James asked:
Senator McGRATH: I have some further questions on that. I can understand how you monitor the impartiality and balance with radio stations. For example, with Triple J, do stations keep a log of news items and guests?
Mr Scott: Yes, we keep program logs for a period of time.
Senator McGRATH: With that period of time, is it all the time or—
Mr Scott: I just want to check on that. I know we keep tapes of interviews that have gone to air or recordings because we need to do that for defamation cases or other complaints so that we can access that over time. During election campaigns, for example, we keep a monitoring and a log of interviews that take place but also interviews that are offered and rejected. That is what we do during election campaigns.
I suppose at other times we need to be able, particularly when it comes to a range of voices, principal, relevant viewpoints around an issue that is an issue in our editorial policies, to go back and check who has been on air so that we are in a position to do that.
Senator McGRATH: What are these logs? Is it subject? Length of time? Would that be in the log?
Mr Scott: I think they just broadly cover who was on air and the issue that was the subject of discussion. I can get detail on what those reports are, if you wish them.

Answer:
As required under the *Broadcasting Services Act*, ABC Radio retains 24 hour transmission logs for each ABC Radio service for a period of six weeks. If a complaint is received, the ABC must retain a record of the content in question for 70 days from the date the complaint was made.

Generally, those involved in producing news content would likely retain notes about interviews, contacts, topics. There is no minimum period of retention for notes related to day-to-day broadcasting, and would vary depending on the individual.

Local Radio uses a "rundown system" as an aid in program preparation and some metadata is published in online program guides and apps. The "rundowns" would include topics discussed, guests/talent names and contact details. These are useful for program teams to keep track of content covered and talent contact information. Records are retained for a period of approximately two years.