

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015**  
**Communications Portfolio**  
**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Question No: 45**

**Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Pages 34-35, 27/5/2015**

**Topic: The killing fields documentary – editorial bias review and audit**

**Senator McGrath, James asked:**

**Senator McGRATH:** Who commissioned Colleen Ryan to do the editorial bias review and audit last year, I think?

**Mr Scott:** I am not quite sure that I would quite depict it as an editorial bias review; that is your phrase. The ABC chairman, Mr James Spigelman, has referenced this. Part of the ABC Board's responsibility is to look at editorial standards. They set the editorial policies. They have responsibility under the act to ensure that the ABC is meeting requirements around bias, impartiality and appropriate editorial standards, so we have now commissioned a number of reports as the Board. We go to someone outside of the organisation; we give them the editorial policies, we give them a block of content and we ask them to provide feedback and advice to the board. Ryan, a former editor of *The Financial Review*, was commissioned by the board, and it was the fourth such editorial review in this current block. We did some some years ago; it was the fourth in the current series.

**Senator McGRATH:** How much was she paid for doing that?

**Mr Scott:** I will have to take that on notice. It was a fairly standard consultant's rate.

**Answer:**

The Board commissions each Editorial Review, and appoints the reviewer from a range of potential candidates. The shortlist is prepared by the Head, Editorial Policy, and comprises people selected because of relevant (and extensive) experience in the broad area to be considered within each individual review. Colleen Ryan was chosen primarily for her extensive experience as a senior financial reporter and former editor of the *Australian Financial Review*.

Ms Ryan was paid \$24,000 for her work on Editorial Review 4.