

**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: 50**

**Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Written 27/05/2015**

**Topic: Defamation Costs**

**Senator McGrath, James asked:**

1-3. What was the cost of defending the defamation proceeding brought by George Alex, *Alex v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* [2015] NSWDC 78? Hobart office

How many staff work at the ABC's Hobart office?

Did the ABC have sufficient capacity in its Hobart office to cover the broadcast of the Hobart ANZAC Day march and main service for the Centenary commemorations this year, or were staff from other ABC offices sent to Hobart to assist with the coverage?

How did the staffing and coverage of the Hobart commemorations compare to the coverage of commemorations in the other capital cities?

**Answer:**

The total external costs of defending the matter up to and including judgment in the ABC's favour were \$14,297.19 (excluding GST). The costs included solicitor fees, barrister fees and incidental disbursements.

A total of 138 staff are employed in the ABC's Hobart office, including 16 casuals (*data as at 14 June 2015*).

The ABC Hobart office provided the majority of the production crew required to broadcast the Anzac Day commemorations, using six cameras. However, these staff were complemented by some interstate staff. This level of staffing and number of cameras is consistent with the historical average for Tasmania's Anzac Day coverage and is consistent with the average coverage in other Australian capital cities.