

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 115

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Written, 7/6/2017

Topic: Pay packages across ABC

Senator Roberts, Malcolm asked:

Senator ROBERTS: I am going to focus on cost and public policy. What was the average percentage rise in individual pay packages across the ABC in the last 12 months?

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

Senator ROBERTS: You would know that I serve the people of Queensland and that therefore I ask questions on behalf of the people of Queensland. Perhaps you do not know that our supporters have a strong moral compass and a strong work ethic. So let me just ask you a few preliminary questions before I get to the main questions. Are you aware that people across Queensland are concerned about energy prices and security, overregulation and government intrusion into people's lives and tax increases paying for rampant out-of-control government spending? Are you aware now, more specifically, that the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that wages went up 1.9 per cent last year, and that that involved a 2.1 per cent cost of living rise?

Ms Guthrie: I am not sure what you are quoting.

Senator ROBERTS: The Australian Bureau of Statistics statistics—I am leading into questions specifically about the ABC.

Ms Guthrie: I do not have the ABS statistics in front of me.

Senator ROBERTS: Okay, that is reasonable. People's wages though—what I am getting to—are not keeping up with prices. People's standard of living is falling. People are essentially getting poorer. So are you aware that electricity price rises are killing industry and small business?

Ms Guthrie: Senator, it does not seem that that is a question that, as the Managing Director of the ABC, I should be opining on.

Senator ROBERTS: Okay. Do you know that workers outside government had on average a 1.8 per cent rise last year while the people, whose wages they pay for—public servants—had a 2.4 per cent rise. So why did the people who pay for public service wage rises get less than the public servants they pay for?

Senator DASTYARI: Because of the government.

Ms Guthrie: I said that I would take on notice the increases at the ABC, and that is all I can, frankly, speak to intelligently.

Senator ROBERTS: So, Australians want to know public service salaries—and I have asked this question of every department head that has come to Senate estimates when I have been in a session with them. What, Ms Guthrie, is your annual pay, including all entitlements?

Ms Guthrie: My annual pay is set by the Remuneration Tribunal and it is currently \$900,000.

Senator ROBERTS: Thank you.

Answer:

2.3 per cent.