

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 551

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 9 (1/12/2014)

Topic: State-based 7.30 editions savings

Senator Canavan: How much are you saving from the removal of the state based 7.30 editions?

Ms Torney: It is mixed up in savings across our state newsrooms. I can take that on notice and get back to you.

Senator CANAVAN: Can you also take on notice how much of that savings is being reinvested into the local 7pm news, as you said earlier.

Ms Torney: Certainly.

Answer:

The state based changes are part of the broader saving initiative being rolled out across all newsrooms, e.g. including changes to state based and length of radio bulletins. These changes will lead to total savings of \$2.5m per annum.

The ABC recognises the importance of state based news and current affairs and in 2013- 2014 invested in new outer-suburban news bureaux, new equipment for regional offices and launched new state-focused online news portals. The ABC however must continually assess its investment and ensure it provides relevant programming and content to audiences in the manner that they might seek it.

In 2015, *ABC News* will appoint a State Coverage Producer in each capital city newsroom to coordinate the planning and production of special programs, feature reports and in-depth stories for all platforms. State and Territory newsrooms will also provide expanded and in-depth coverage on relevant news days. This will include extended special 7 pm news bulletins on significant news days, one-off special programs on television and radio around major political and community events and online special reports to create an in-depth resource. Despite the overall cut in *ABC News* staff numbers, under these changes the bulk of existing resources dedicated to regional news and current affairs will be maintained, but differently allocated.

In relation to local 7 pm bulletins, each newsroom will produce more local one-hour news specials around breaking news events, natural disasters, major political stories, state budgets and elections and significant corporate events and criminal trials. An extended 40 minute *ABC News Sunday* program will feature more extended local stories, investigations and political interviews. In addition, a new weekly program on *ABC TV* and *News 24* will commission and showcase the best feature and picture stories from across the states.