

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: 578

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Q&A tweets

Senator McGRATH asked:

1. What are the moderation procedures for tweets appearing on Q&A?
2. In regards to tweets on ABC's Q&A, ABC Managing Director Mark Scott has previously said at Estimates that 'when the programme [Q&A] is running, someone is there checking what is up on the screen'.
 - a. Is this still the case?
3. Why did Q&A allow inflammatory and unsubstantiated tweets regarding terrorism to be aired on 22 September 2014, four days after anti-terror raids in Sydney and Brisbane?
4. Why did Q&A allow a transphobic tweet to be aired on 12 October 2014 when Cate McGregor was a guest on the Q&A panel?

Answer:

1. The tweets appearing onscreen in the program Q&A are moderated by a team of three producers who continually review the live stream including the *Q&A* hashtag (#qanda). As the program goes live to air they select a sample of those tweets to appear on screen. The ABC publishes [the Q&A moderation guidelines](#) online.
2. Yes
3. Q&A is a significant component of Australia's vigorous democracy, and provides Australians the opportunity to debate national issues and Twitter has become an important aspect of audience participation on the program. As outlined in question 1, all tweets which go to air are subject to a multi stage moderation process.
4. Group Captain Catherine McGregor AM, Group Captain, Royal Australian Air Force Reserve, made an insightful contribution to the discussion on 13 October and spoke candidly about her own experience as a transgender female. The ABC believes the tweets identified for broadcast during the episode met the moderation guidelines and were appropriate for broadcast, and were chosen to reflect the diverse range of opinion in the Q&A audience. In addition, Group Captain Catherine McGregor AM, has publicly noted that she has no concerns about the publication of these tweets and she would not want the ABC to censor the views they expressed.