

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: 581

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In writing

Topic: Reporting of coal, coal-seam gas and renewable energy

Senator McGrath asked:

Independent analysis of 2,359 separate ABC reports conducted by iSentia on the coal mining, coal seam gas, and renewable energy sectors found the following:

- 15.9% of coal mining stories were favourable (31.6% unfavourable).
- 12.1% of coal seam gas stories were favourable (43.6% unfavourable).
- 52.0% of renewable energy stories were favourable (37.2% unfavourable).

1. Does the ABC consider that these results represent balanced reporting of these industries?
 - a. If so, how can such a position be justified?

Answer:

The ABC is aware that iSentia did a report on the ABC's coverage of energy issues commissioned by the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The study contended that the majority of ABC reports inferred that CSG had a negative impact on the environment and investment in renewable energy should be prioritised. The ABC disagrees with the findings from iSentia related to CSG coverage, as the Corporation's strong editorial policies are in place to ensure a diversity of views on complex issues such as this.

Energy issues, including the environmental impact of CSG mining and the viability of cleaner alternatives have been the subject of debate in many forums. The ABC aims to provide fair and proper coverage to all policy issues and does not accept that it favors one industry over another, or one set of views over another.