

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 159

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 19-20, 30/11/2015

Topic: Reporting – Consultation Process - Station visits to regions

Senator McKenzie, Bridget asked:

Senator McKENZIE: When were staff first informed?

Mr Scott: The decision was made by the executive team.

Senator McKENZIE: When were staff first informed?

Mr Scott: I think staff were informed in late October that these are the changes that were going to be made.

Senator McKENZIE: We had been mulling on this for many months prior to that.

Mr Scott: This is what management teams do. It is not a collective, contrary to what some have suggested from time to time.

Senator McKENZIE: Yes, I appreciate how management works. The consultation process that the organisation then conducted with staff following—

Mr Scott: Then I believe there was a consultation process as is required under our industrial agreement. I do not quite have the timetable for that.

Senator McKenzie: You do not have the timetable. Did you visit stations out in the regions?

Mr Scott: Fiona Reynolds, I think, has visited—

Senator McKENZIE: No, as part of the formal consultation process.

Mr Scott: I will have to check her timetable, but I can take that on notice.

Answer:

In early 2015, an internal Regional Advisory Group was established. Throughout February to April 2015, the ABC Regional Director consulted with staff in every regional office about the development and structure of the division and undertook a staff survey.

Between 9 February 2015 and 24 September 2015 the Regional Director visited the following locations: Wodonga, Shepparton, Wagga Wagga, Newcastle, Muswellbrook, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Port Pirie, Wollongong, Ballarat, Sale, Mt Isa, Townsville, Cairns, Alice Springs, Albany, Bunbury, Port Macquarie, Rockhampton, Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Bega, Mildura, Renmark, Orange and Dubbo. During these 27 visits the Director also met the ABC journalists from Nowra and Port Augusta. The Director also held Skype/telephone conference calls with teams in the other regional offices and expects to visit these teams in the first quarter of 2016.

Formal consultation with employees and unions (CPSU and MEAA) regarding the overall structure of the Regional Division and the process for filling the new positions started in accordance with the *ABC Enterprise Agreement 2013-2016* on 27 May 2015 and concluded on

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9 July 2015. At that time it was agreed that further consultation would take place with any affected Regional staff if/when required on a location-by-location basis.

On 12 June 2015 and again on 28 July 2015, Regional staff were informed of the timeframe for a program/bulletin schedule review. Staff were invited to submit - via an email account or their Regional Advisory Group representative - any ideas that hadn't already been contributed, for consideration.

A final decision on the radio program and bulletin schedules for 2016 was made by the ABC Regional Executive on 23 October 2015. Staff were informed of the planned changes on 28 October 2015.