

**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: 166**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 4/12/2015**

**Topic: Presenting balanced perspectives**

**Senator Reynolds, Linda asked:**

What quantitative measures does the ABC compile in order to ensure it presents balanced perspectives in all of its programming across all platforms, and to ensure subjectivity and political bias are not conflated with editorial standards?

**Answer:**

The ABC does not generally use quantitative measures to monitor its reporting of issues. The ABC has from time to time used quantitative measures as one tool in its assessment of specific programming, such as election coverage. However the ABC considers that there are significant limitations to using quantitative measures alone as they do not indicate the nature of the reporting, its tone or the quality of the coverage, merely how many reports were made.

The ABC's Editorial Policies - [about.abc.net.au/reports-publications/abc-editorial-policies/](http://about.abc.net.au/reports-publications/abc-editorial-policies/) is a framework of principles and standards that assists the organisation to provide content that fulfils its functions under the ABC Act. One of those principles relates to the impartiality and diversity of perspectives, and requires the ABC to present news and information with due impartiality, present a diversity of perspectives, and not unduly favour one perspective over another.

Along with these overarching policies, the ABC has various detailed editorial guidelines to assist staff - [edpols.abc.net.au/guidance](http://edpols.abc.net.au/guidance).

Other internal processes include:

- The daily feedback and discussions that program teams engage in;
- The regular program reviews undertaken of specific programs and content;
- More formal regular quality reviews conducted by management;
- Internal feedback and editorial reviews carried out by editorial policy staff; and
- Regular independent external reviews commissioned by the ABC Board.

Apart from this internal scrutiny there are also processes that members of the public may follow. If a member of the public believes that ABC content is not impartial or balanced then they may submit their complaint to the ABC's Audience & Consumer Affairs department. If the complainant is not satisfied with the ABC's response then they may submit their complaint to the independent regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority.