

ABC Questions on Notice – Senate Economics Committee, 22 January 2021

Question (page 47 of the transcript)

Mr Tapley: Yes, Senator. As I mentioned in my opening statement, we operate from 48 locations around regional Australia. We have 550 content makers operating in regional Australia. Depending on the amount of revenue that flows under the code, we would certainly be looking to enhance the infrastructure that supports that journalism as well. But I hear the point you're making, and we certainly would be looking to invest not only in journalism but in the tools that help that journalism be made.

Senator McDONALD: You have 550 journalists in regional Australia—

Mr Tapley: Content makers.

Senator McDONALD: out of how many across Australia?

Mr Tapley: I believe our total headcount is in the vicinity of 4,000. They're not all content makers. I'd have to come back to you on notice on that.

Answer:

As at December 2020, the ABC had a total headcount of 537 content makers located outside Australia's capital cities, out of a total headcount of 3,273 content makers.

Question (page 46 of the transcript)

Senator McDONALD: I would encourage you to continue supporting that diverse regional ecosystem, please, as you continue these conversations. Finally, I wonder, as part of this, if you would consider moving more journalists or content makers out of Sydney and Melbourne, given the very small proportion that are based regionally—500 out of 8,000. Could you also describe to me what a content maker is?

Mr Tapley: In our five-year plan that was launched last year, we did emphasise that we are looking to get more local. We have got a public commitment that we want to get 75 per cent of our content makers outside of the Ultimo building in Sydney. We are working towards that under the five-year plan. In terms of the definition of—

Senator McDONALD: Can I just clarify that. That's not just moving people from Ultimo to Western Sydney; that is genuinely out of the capital cities?

Mr Tapley: We are still exploring how we will go about meeting that target. It may well be that we have a larger presence in Western Sydney. We do have an office in Parramatta at the moment, but we may look to put more people in Western Sydney. We are also looking more broadly at how we could meet that decentralisation objective in other areas of the country. In terms of the definition of 'content maker', there is quite a long definition. I will provide that to you on notice very quickly after the conclusion of this hearing.

Answer:

The category of 'content maker' includes all functions inherent in the commissioning, gathering, production, presentation, delivery and management of content and content-related services.