

## Draft Statement - Senate Estimates Committee

Tuesday 13 February

I welcome this opportunity today to share with the Committee some of the achievements and successes we have delivered for audiences over summer.

Since the start of July 2023, the ABC Emergency team has activated for more than 475 events (up until 3 Feb 2024).

I would like to particularly acknowledge the incredible work of our North Queensland teams who delivered more than 65 hours of emergency coverage around tropical cyclones Jasper and Kirrily.

Rural and regional communities know and trust the ABC for good reason. We have earned their trust through our hard work and dedication to those communities. I'm proud to say the ABC has once again proven to be a critical source of trusted information to help keep people safe.

Across this summer, ABC content has strongly resonated with audiences.

ABC's NYE TV broadcast coverage reached a massive 3.4 million viewers, up 200,000 on 2022.

Around 500,000 people watched the inspirational Australian of the Year Awards on January 25.

triple J's hottest 100 recorded more than 2.35 million votes. 34.5% of the population aged 18-75 years engaged with the event this year, or roughly 6.5 million people.

Significantly, more than 50 per cent of the songs were from Australian artists and half a million dollars was raised for the mental health organisation Headspace.

Programming as diverse as *Muster Dogs* and the political series *Nemesis* has given our audiences a mix of feelgood adventures and recent political history.

Both programs have been enjoyed across ABC TV and ABC iview by more than 1.4 million people so far.

With numbers like these it is little wonder that the ABC continues to be valued by more than 80% of Australians and has significantly higher levels of trust than commercial media.

Of course, the media landscape is changing rapidly, and the ABC needs to continue adapt to remain relevant to Australians.

In this context I am pleased to report that our digital first strategy is working.

ABC iview web and app, and both the ABC listen and ABC News apps are all up compared to last financial year.

In January 2024, more than 32 million hours of content was consumed on ABC iview.

The ABC is #2 in Digital News audience rankings and #1 for general news.

480,000 people now use the ABC listen app on a weekly basis.

Sport was a primary audience driver across audio this summer with Test Cricket and the Australian Open Tennis delivering strong audiences.

Overall, Sport delivered close to 2 million streams across the 6-week period.

ABC's third-party reach has grown - 25% of the Australian adult population has now watched, read or listened to ABC content on a third-party platform.

There is more to be done and there is no room for complacency but I am confident the evolution of the ABC into a modern digital media service is heading in the right direction.

On Saturday the ABC was recognised with 11 awards at the AACTAs. I urge you to catch up on some of those programs which include *The Newsreader*, *Old People's Home for Teenagers* and of course... *Bluey*.

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I have previously provided information to the Committee on the Review into ABC Systems and Processes in Support of Staff who Experience Racism.

This is an important piece of work for the ABC and I am determined to ensure it is as comprehensive as possible in every way. It is crucial that we do not rush this important work.

The review is being led by respected lawyer and cultural leader Dr Terri Janke and work on the review commenced on 20 October, following the Voice Referendum. The independent process being managed by Dr Janke and her team has required significant preparation in terms of understanding the ABC's processes and culture and ensuring every opportunity is afforded to any individual who wishes to engage with the review.

The review is expected to produce an anonymised report by the end of June and Dr Janke's findings and recommendations will be made public. The final report will be peer reviewed.

The review will build on our work as the first media organisation to have an Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan.

This timeline is consistent with Dr Janke's planning and other conversations I had with similarly qualified leaders who work in this space.

I will update the committee on this work in due course.

Thank you. I now welcome your questions.

