

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Inquiry Questions on Notice
ABC Amendment (Local Content) Bill hearing February 2015
Communications Portfolio
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 3

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

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Topic: Breakdown of costs provided in submission

Senator Xenophon asked:

Mr Scott: That is right. But as Mr Anderson said, there are staff costs, facilities costs, cash costs. If we did not include all of them, then we would not be realistically costing up the actual cost to the ABC delivery.

Senator XENOPHON: I appreciate that but, further to Mr Anderson's evidence, would it be fair to say that some of the costs that are factored in terms of the figures that we have been provided in this table are somewhat inflated? You charge \$100 an hour for an editing suite; I am not sure whether you charge on a daily rate, even if the suite is being used only for an hour or two, or if someone is being paid \$35 or \$40 an hour when in fact it is being charged out at a much higher rate than that. I would be grateful if we could obtain that sort of detail.

Mr Scott: Sure.

Mr Anderson: Sure. We go down to the per hour on each of those rates, and if it is not being used it is not being charged.

CHAIR: Is it possible, for the exercise that Senator Xenophon is going through, to get a proper breakdown of what one of these particular productions uses?

Mr Anderson: Of course.

...

Senator XENOPHON: All I am suggesting is that we get a breakdown of the costs given in table 2 and perhaps we could look at them a little more forensically and that might be a fairer way of assessing that.

Answer:

Facility rates are set by the ABC and are representative of market rates, on an hourly basis. They take into account all relevant costs and include consideration of, amongst others, costs of purchase / depreciation / replacement and maintenance costs.

Internal labour rates are determined by the ABC with regard to program demand for labour and the costs associated with providing pools of staff to each state and territory. The utilisation of that specific pool of staff is reviewed to determine 4 rates, per pool. These include ordinary hourly rate, overtime hourly rate (x1.5), Saturday hourly rate and a Sunday / Public Holiday hourly rate.

The total cost to the ABC for the program *Countdown: Do Yourself a Favour* was \$727,966. This is split between \$440,938 in labour, \$179,088 for facilities and \$107,940 in cash.

The total cost to the ABC for the program *When The Beatles Drove Us Wild* was \$506,961. This is split between \$336,449 in labour costs, \$115,512 in facilities and \$55,000 in cash.

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The total cost to the ABC for the seven part series Restoration Australia will be \$3,550,552. This is split between \$2,260,856 in labour costs, \$717,808 in facilities and \$571, 888 in cash.

The total cost to the ABC of Great Expectations, the story of orang-utans at the Adelaide Zoo, was \$208,589, with \$129,404 in labour, \$61,185 in facilities and \$18,000 in cash.