

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 34

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 77-78, 24/02/2015

Topic: Pooling Process

Senator URQUHART asked:

Senator URQUHART: I want to come to the pooling process. The issue now is just the number of direct ones as opposed to the pooling ones. I understood it was about 180. Is that correct?

Mr Scott: Do you have the numbers on that, Mr Pendleton?

Mr Pendleton: Total redundancies year-to-date to 22 February are 241. That is from 1 July for the financial year.

Mr Scott: Some of those will be the Australia Network ones as well.

Senator URQUHART: Which were prior to this.

Mr Scott: Yes, they occurred previously. But they are still under the financial year.

Senator URQUHART: Do you have a breakdown of how many there are?

Mr Scott: Yes. Let me give you that, too, on notice. I can give you a more detailed breakdown on notice.

Senator URQUHART: That would be great. Just in relation, then, to the pooled ones, I understand that about 330 staff who are on equivalent pay grades will be placed in pools.

Mr Scott: Yes. That would be about right. But most of that process has run. I think the question was raised at the end of last year that there was uncertainty facing our staff, and the uncertainty that our staff faced was that they were in a pool and that we had not yet run the decision making and prioritisation process around that pool. Well, we had to consult first. We had to consult around that consultation process. We had to consult with our staff. We now have consulted, and so we have run that pooled process.

Senator URQUHART: Okay. Can you just step me through that process? The first step is consultation. What is the process?

Mr Scott: There was consultation. I can give you more of this on notice...

Senator URQUHART: ...So is it fair to say then that, of the 300-odd employees that you were talking about, there are a number of them who know that their jobs are secure, and the rest know—

Mr Scott: Yes; I think the vast majority of them, Senator. I think the number of positions—and I will correct this on the record—but the number of positions that were going out of that pooled engagement was, I think, around 100, or fewer than 100. So, on that reckoning, 200-plus now know that they are not affected by it...

Senator URQUHART: ...Okay. In relation to the numbers that I asked you about earlier, will you provide those on notice—that is, the breakdown of those 241 jobs? Can you please provide, within that answer, how many employees have already gone as a result of the job cuts that were announced in November?

Mr Scott: Yes. What we will do, if you give us that question on notice, is give you from the date of the question on notice an up-to-date list of the flow of the redundancy program.

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Answer:

Breakdown of Total Redundancies for the current financial year

In the 2014-15 financial year, the ABC has instigated 271 redundancies, to date. The reasons for these reductions fall into the following categories:

Reason	Headcount
Loss of Australia Network contract	79
Restructures	18
Shop Closures	3
2014 funding cuts	171
Grand Total	271

**Data as at 19 March 2015*

Of the proposed 400 job cuts (approximately) announced in November 2014, 171 employees have already left the organisation.

A further 114 redundancies are still being processed, and approximately 100 further redundancies are anticipated as the ABC continues to determine the full impact of the funding cuts.

Pooling Process

The ABC chose to use a pooling process where there were groups of affected staff in the same category or class and the ABC was proposing to retain some, but not all, positions. This process has been used by other government departments, and has allowed the ABC to retain the skills base necessary to position it for the future.

The ABC can elect employees on this basis under Part M of the *ABC Enterprise Agreement 2013 – 2016*. For each selection pool, the ABC conducted a merit selection process based on selection criteria.

51 selection pools were established covering 327 employees.

By 17 December 2014, the ABC concluded the selection process and advised participants of the preliminary results, but that consultation would continue before proceeding further.

Consultation on all selection pools remained open until 17 February 2015. Of the 327 employees placed in selection pools, 91 were made redundant. As at 19 March 2015, 59 of these employees have already left the organisation, which is included in the 171 redundancies related to the November 2014 budget cuts outlined in the table above.