

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016
Communications Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 15

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Hansard Ref: Page 20, 9/02/2016

Topic: Local Content – redescribe

Senator McKenzie, Bridget asked:

Senator McKENZIE: Thank you, Minister. Just finally, I want to understand better the decision to redescribe local content in licence requirements to 'material of local significance'. Could someone shed some light on that change for me

Ms McNeill: I am not conscious of a change.

Senator McKENZIE: My understanding was that we redescribed local context in licence requirements as 'material of local significance'.

Ms McNeill: It has long been material of local significance.

Senator McKENZIE: Rather than locally produced content. Would it be a big change to actually insert 'locally produced content' into the licence requirements?

Ms McNeill: It would obviously depend on the specifics of the change, but, yes, it is possible to have material of local significance which is not necessarily content produced in a local licence area. I think that the current definition of 'material of local significance' generally includes material which is produced in the local area.

Mr Chapman: I do have a recollection that many years ago there was movement around that wording. Without sounding formal about it, we will take that on notice. What I would like to do is come back and revisit when that happened and what the drivers for it were. I do have a recollection that there was something to that effect, but it was a long time ago.

Senator McKENZIE: I would really appreciate, as you said, the drivers. The rip-and-reads are being counted currently as local content provision?

Ms McNeill: If they meet the definitional requirements, yes. If they relate to the licence area particularly, then yes.

Answer:

The term 'material of local significance' has been used in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* since section 43A was introduced to the Act in 2006. Section 43A of the Act requires the ACMA to define 'material of local significance' in the licence condition.

Material of local significance is defined in the licence condition as material that:

...relates directly to:

- (a) the local area; or*
- (b) the licensee's licence area.*

That definition has been unchanged since the inception of the licence condition.

The term 'locally produced content', which appears to be focused on place of production rather than the nature of the content produced, would be a material change.