

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearing February 2016
Communications Portfolio
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 36

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: Page 49-50, 9/02/2016

Topic: Programming priorities

Senator McKenzie, Bridget asked:

Senator McKENZIE: But in terms of where the proportion of the spend goes, isn't it true to say that the ABC chooses to invest in products that rate highly?

Mr Scott: No. The most expensive national network that we run—much more expensive than any of the others—is Radio National. Radio National does not and will not win the ratings. We did a production with Opera Australia where we ran opera on ABC television for four nights in a row—a new Australian opera format; a very expensive production—and we knew that that would never win the ratings. I can give you countless examples of where we spend on programing that will never win the ratings. They are a priority for us.

Senator McKENZIE: As a proportion of the spend, that is not actually—

Mr Scott: I am happy to provide you with lots of details.

Senator McKENZIE: That is fine; you can spin it that.

Answer:

The ABC meets its Charter obligation to broadcast programs of both wide appeal and specialised interest by investing in a diverse range of content. Some of this content, such as the 2015 Asian Cup football tournament, ABC TV's Doctor Blake Mysteries and triple j's Hottest 100 attract large audiences. Other content, such as that produced for ABC NewsRadio, Radio National and ABC TV programs such as Landline attract smaller audiences, but are vital in ensuring that the ABC adheres to its Charter obligations and provides services of interest and appeal to all Australians.