

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 14

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Local content policies

Senator Urquhart:

In the two previous Estimates hearings I have asked about the percentage of Lateline and 7.30 stories originating from each state or territory. The responses I have received so far indicated an overwhelming weighting to the Eastern States. Given the ABC receives funding from the Commonwealth, what are the ABC's wider official policies with regards to the equal and/or fair representation of current affairs and news across all states and territories? Does a policy document exist?

Answer:

The ABC does not have an official policy or set quotas for the representation of regions, states or territories in national television news and current affairs programs. The ABC's national programs make their coverage decisions based on newsworthiness and the relevance of stories to national audiences. The Executive Producers of national programs assess topics of national interest from all States and territories.

In addition, the National Reporting Team, established in 2013, has employed journalists in Perth, Brisbane and Darwin as well as Sydney and Melbourne. Local radio presents current affairs topics and conversations with local presenters across the country every day.

The ABC also makes considerable provision for state coverage, with a local version of 7.30 on Fridays, radio current affairs reporters in all states and territories and the prime-time 7pm TV News which is broadcast seven nights a week with a mix of local, national and international news.