

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

The Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 156

The Australian Communications and Media Authority

Hansard Ref: Page 22, 25/05/2017

Topic: Overall Compliance with the code

Senator Reynolds, Linda asked:

CHAIR: Could you, perhaps, Mr Bean, or Ms McNeill, let the committee know what the overall compliance with the code is like by broadcasters?

Mr Bean: Numbers of complaints and numbers of breach findings and so on?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Bean: Yes, we can provide those statistics.

CHAIR: Is compliance with the code generally quite high?

Mr Bean: Yes.

CHAIR: If you could take that on notice. With the complaints, how many have you found have been incidental or accidental and not deliberate breaches?

Mr Bean: In relation to any particular type of breach, or just generally speaking?

CHAIR: In general.

Mr Bean: I asked because the incidental nature of things is adapted to certain types of breaches and not others. But we can certainly find for you examples of investigations in which that has been the relevant criterion.

CHAIR: I have a recollection that we have discussed this before and that the number of breaches by broadcasters was actually very low in relation to the code. So I am wondering if you have some updated figures and perhaps, a bit further on, the nature of the breaches as well.

Answer:

Every year, over six and a half million hours of content is broadcast on television and radio services across the various sectors. The following statistics concern complaints and enquiries received and the outcome of investigations finalised by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) about broadcast matters during in the period 1 July 2014 to 12 June 2017:

All broadcasting services:

- 3,230 written complaints and enquiries received about broadcast matters
- 299 finalised investigations into compliance with codes of practice or licence conditions, consisting of:
 - 45 breach findings
 - 254 non breach findings.

Commercial free-to-air television licensees:

- 137 finalised investigations into compliance with codes of practice or licence conditions, consisting of:
 - 18 breach findings
 - 119 non breach findings.

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Subscription television licensees:

- seven finalised investigations into compliance with codes of practice or licence conditions, consisting of:
 - one breach finding
 - six non breach findings.