

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 579

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paul Bongiorno Contract RN

Senator McGrath asked:

1. When was Mr Paul Bongiorno offered a role as a regular commentator on ABC Radio National?
2. Who decided to offer Mr Bongiorno this role and when was the formal offer made to him?
3. Was the approval of the Managing Director or the Board required before the formal offer was made?
4. Were any other candidates considered for this role or was Mr Bongiorno offered it directly?
 - a. If the latter, why was Mr Bongiorno singled out?
5. What particular credentials did Mr Bongiorno have that made him the most suitable candidate for this role?
6. Is the ABC Radio National spot Mr Bongiorno's only commitment at the ABC?
 - a. If not, what other roles does Mr Bongiorno have at the ABC?
7. How much is Mr Bongiorno being paid as a regular commentator on ABC Radio National?
8. Is Mr Bongiorno on a contract?
 - a. If so, how long has he been signed for?
9. How frequently does Mr Bongiorno appear on ABC Radio National and for roughly what duration each week?

Answer:

1. January 2013.
2. The Radio National Breakfast Executive Producer in consultation with the Radio National Daily Editor, offered the position to Mr Bongiorno following the network's annual discussions around introducing new commentators.
3. No.
4. Yes other candidates were considered. Mr Bongiorno was offered the role as he was determined to have the requisite skills and experience and was superior to other candidates for the role.
5. Mr Bongiorno is a highly respected senior press gallery journalist, who is well informed on political issues and history over several decades. He has on-air skill and experience.

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6. Yes. Mr Bongiorno has occasionally appeared on other ABC networks such as 702 ABC Sydney and may do so in the future.
7. Mr Bongiorno is paid \$200 per week for preparation, contribution and his time.
8. Mr Bongiorno is not on a contract.
9. Mr Bongiorno appears twice a week and spends a total of 14 minutes on air.