

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2010**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Question No: 147**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 2-3**

**Topic: General Manager ABC Radio Station Townsville**

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

I am concerned that the ABC radio station in Townsville has not had a general manager for, as I understand it, several months. Can you confirm that that is the case and indicate if there is a reason for that. Is the position about to be filled? What is the process?

**Answer:**

Following the transfer of the Regional Content Manager of ABC Townsville to Newcastle, a Townsville local presenter and, more recently, the Victorian Regional Content Director acted in the position of Regional Content Manager ABC Townsville.

Interviews for a full time replacement manager have been held and the former Victorian Regional Content Director has now been appointed to the Regional Content Manager position in Townsville.

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**Question No: 148**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 3**

**Topic: ABC & Charitable Work**

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

In relation to far North Queensland constituent, Mrs Patricia West, and her proposal for a national children's charity run through the ABC. Could the ABC advise if there are any ways in which they could take on the role suggested by this constituent?

I understand from my constituent that the sort of project that she is proposing actually happens with the BBC. Could you alert me as to if it is the same sort of program and why the BBC can do it?

**Answer:**

The ABC and the BBC are different organisations run under different charters. While the BBC may be permitted under its Charter and Agreement to engage in the charitable works identified by Mrs West, the ABC must comply with the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (ABC Act).

The ABC Act enables the ABC to undertake activities related to its statutory functions.

From time to time, the ABC broadcasts community service announcements relating to charity appeals, but the ABC does not run or administer these charities.

The ABC could not make donations of funds or provide significant resources to a charity unless it was to promote the musical, dramatic or other performing arts or was otherwise intimately involved in the making of programs within the ABC Charter.

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**Question No: 149**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 4**

**Topic: ABC Self Promotion & Advertising on TV**

**Senator Wortley asked:**

Can you provide advice on the log of ABC advertising for Friday 15 October 2010 between 1800 hours and 2130 hours and on Saturday 16 October 2010 between 1830 hours and 2030 hours?

**Answer:**

	<b>15 October 1800-2130</b>	<b>16 October 1830-2030</b>
Program promos	25	15
Program menus	2	0
Product promos	4	2
Brand promos	1	0
Idents	6	4
Freeview	1	0

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**Question No: 150**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 4**

**Topic: ABC Sale of DVDs**

**Senator Cameron asked:**

On the issue of ABC selling DVDs, a lot of them are imported. Given the strength of the dollar, is the ABC passing that benefit on to consumers in Australia?

**Answer:**

The majority of DVDs sold through ABC Shops and Shop Online are manufactured in Australia.

DVDs with an ABC or BBC label are manufactured in Australia. The majority of other DVDs sold in ABC Shops and ABC Shop Online are pressed in Australia by Technicolour Australia.

Only a small portion of DVDs are imported from overseas. In these cases, most suppliers to the ABC have a 3 month forward cover, which delays the impact of any currency changes on the ABC and therefore the ABC's ability to pass on any benefits to our customers.

Depending on the strength of the dollar, the ABC will pass on any benefits in reduced retail prices to the consumer for these items over time.

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**Question No: 151**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 4**

**Topic: Break-up of Q&A Audience**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Can you provide an update on the break-up of Q&A audiences from 17 May 2010 to date?

**Answer:**

ABC audience figures for Q&A episodes 15- 40 are as follows:

**EPISODE 15 – MAY 17**

<b>Voting Intention</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
COALITION	33
ALP	32
GREENS	15
OTHER**	1
NOT SPECIFIED	19
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 16 – MAY 24 (MELBOURNE)**

<b>Voting Intention</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	38
GREENS	13
OTHER**	2

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NOT SPECIFIED	9
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 17 - MAY 31**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	35
GREENS	15
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	9
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

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**EPISODE 18 – JUNE 7 (CASULA)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	35
ALP	36
GREENS	11
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	16
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 19 – JUNE 14**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	29
ALP	27
GREENS	23
OTHER **	9
NOT SPECIFIED	13
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 20 – JUNE 21**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	37

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ALP	34
GREENS	19
OTHER**	0
NOT SPECIFIED	9
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 21 – JUNE 28**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	33
ALP	37
GREENS	17
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	11
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 22 – JULY 5**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	39
GREENS	12
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	9



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<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 23 – JULY 12**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	36
ALP	36
GREENS	17
OTHER**	0
NOT SPECIFIED	11
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 24 – JULY 19**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	33
ALP	34
GREENS	19
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	11
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

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**EPISODE 25 – JULY 26**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	34
ALP	36
GREENS	16
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	12
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 26 – AUGUST 2 (BRISBANE)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	35
GREENS	17
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	9
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 27 – AUGUST 9 (ADELAIDE)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	40

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ALP	40
GREENS	9
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	10
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 28 – AUGUST 16 (CASULA)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	37
GREENS	12
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	10
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 29 – AUGUST 23 (POST ELECTION)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	37
ALP	39
GREENS	16
OTHER**	3
NOT SPECIFIED	5

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<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 30 – AUGUST 30 (MELBOURNE)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	37
ALP	41
GREENS	14
OTHER**	0
NOT SPECIFIED	8
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 31 – SEPTEMBER 6**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	47
ALP	37
GREENS	12
OTHER**	1
NOT SPECIFIED	4
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

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**EPISODE 32 – SEPTEMBER 13**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	36
ALP	40
GREENS	15
OTHER**	1
NOT SPECIFIED	9
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 33 – SEPTEMBER 20**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	37
ALP	39
GREENS	17
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	5
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 34 – SEPTEMBER 27**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38

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ALP	40
GREENS	14
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	5
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 35 – OCTOBER 4 (FESTIVAL OF DANGEROUS IDEAS)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	41
ALP	31
GREENS	17
OTHER**	7
NOT SPECIFIED	4
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 36 – OCTOBER 11**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	40
ALP	37
GREENS	14
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	7

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<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 37 – OCTOBER 18**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	37
ALP	35
GREENS	17
OTHER**	5
NOT SPECIFIED	6
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 38 – OCTOBER 25**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	34
ALP	33
GREENS	13
OTHER**	1
NOT SPECIFIED	20
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

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**EPISODE 39 – NOVEMBER 1 (PERTH)**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	40
ALP	37
GREENS	13
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	7
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>

**EPISODE 40 – NOVEMBER 8**

<b>VOTING INTENTION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
COALITION	38
ALP	37
GREENS	16
OTHER**	2
NOT SPECIFIED	7
<b>TOTAL AUDIENCE</b>	<b>100</b>



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**Question No: 152**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 5**

**Topic: Break-up of *Q&A* Audience**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Who controls the Tweets shown on *Q&A*?

**Answer:**

The tweets shown on screen during live screenings of *Q&A* are the responsibility of the *Q&A* Executive Producer.

*Q&A* is a live program. The timeframe between when tweets are posted and then broadcast on-air is short. Editorial decisions must be made within this timeframe.

Tweets relevant to *Q&A* are monitored by *Q&A* as they are posted on Twitter. This is a two stage process. In the first stage, the Producer selects tweets from the twitter stream and passes this list to a Senior Producer. The Senior Producer selects tweets from this short list and these tweets are then broadcast on-air during the program.

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**Question No: 153**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 6**

**Topic: Number and selection of Tweets on Q&A**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

In relation to the *Q&A* program aired on Monday 25 October 2010, how many tweet messages were received and what activity was undertaken to determine that out of all the hundreds and thousands, why the ABC chose a tweet suggesting that someone throw a shoe at the former Prime Minister John Howard?

**Answer:**

On 25 October 2010, during the broadcast of ABC's *Q&A* program, over 17,000 tweets were posted using the #qanda tag (approximately 4 per second during the program).

Using its limited staff and resources, *Q&A* reviews as many *Q&A* tweets as possible.

For the process behind the selection of tweets put to air by *Q&A*, refer to ABC's response to q152.

The *Q&A* producer selects to show onscreen tweets that are lively, humorous, succinct, opinionated, and which counterpoint the views of the panellists and/or audience. The tweet was selected because it met those criteria.

As stated by the Managing Director at the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing, the *Q&A* studio audience is unable to see the tweets as they appear on screen.

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**Question No: 154**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 6**

**Topic: David Hicks on Q&A**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Did the ABC pre-record David Hicks for the *Q&A* program?

Did the ABC help arrange and organise David Hicks appearance on the *Q&A* program? If so, what was the cost of it and why was it considered to be a priority?

**Answer:**

The David Hicks video question to former Prime Minister John Howard was not recorded, arranged or organised by the ABC.

*Q&A* asks viewers to submit video questions and comments. This video question was sent to the ABC.

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**Question No: 155**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 7**

**Topic: Video Clips on Q&A**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

How many video clips were received by the ABC in anticipation of the *Q&A* program aired on Monday 25 October 2010 and what editorial process resulted in the choice of Mr Hicks as the one to send to air?

**Answer:**

*Q&A* received 19 video questions related to its program scheduled on 25 October 2010.

David Hicks' video question was selected as Mr Hicks' incarceration and trial, during the time John Howard was Prime Minister, were of significant news value and interest to Australians. The *Q&A* Producers believed that a question from Mr Hicks to Mr Howard was similarly of news value and interest to Australian viewers.

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**Question No: 156**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 7-8**

**Topic: Report of Chairman of Election Coverage Review Committee 2010**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

On page 5 of the Report of the Chairman of the Election Coverage Review Committee of 2010, we are told: *the largest category of complaint related to bias (982) of which 545 alleged anti-Opposition/pro-Government bias, 330 alleged anti-Government/pro-Opposition bias and 107 did not specify.*

Were there any complaints that any ABC story through the election campaign was in fact anti-Green?

**Answer:**

Of the 107 unspecified complaints of bias, five were critical of the ABC's treatment of the Greens, alleging that the Greens were not given fair or adequate coverage.

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**Question No: 157**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 9-10**

**Topic: Anti Israel Sentiments/Bias**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Does the following list indicate at least to some people, anti-Israel sentiment?

The ABC report on a recent EU declaration stated that it ‘also urged an end to rocket and “terrorist” attacks against Israel’. The ABC found it necessary to put the word ‘terrorist’ from the EU declaration into inverted commas, whereas the EU declaration used the word ‘terrorist’ without it being in inverted commas. That is an example on 17 September 2010.

Then the ABC frequently refers to Israel’s security barrier as a ‘wall’, which, I note, is a term favoured by Israel’s critics. As I understand it, the security barrier is in the form of a fence and not a wall for more than 95 per cent of its length, yet we continually hear about Israel’s security ‘wall’ as opposed to a fence.

Another example is that areas that Israel considers to be disputed territory the ABC generally refers to as ‘occupied territory’ or ‘Palestinian territory’. On the other hand, South Ossetia, claimed by Georgia as an integral part of its territory, is described as ‘disputed territory’. The ICRP, I understand, has commented as follows on the use of such terms: The unqualified use of either term—‘disputed land’ and ‘occupied territory’—by the ABC could suggest lack of impartiality in reporting.

Another example is that we know that Gaza is being blockaded by Israel and Egypt, yet the ABC frequently refers to the ‘Israeli’ blockade. It rarely if ever uses the term ‘Egyptian’ blockade. This is the case even for reports concerning the Rafah crossing, which is on the Egypt-Gaza border and which Israel does not control.

On 10 March in the Midday Report on ABC TV, Middle East correspondent Anne Barker declared:

The growth of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank is the biggest obstacle to peace. So apparently for the ABC the ongoing Palestinian terror and refusal to accept Israel as a Jewish state or the insistence of the so-called Palestinian right of return comes somewhere behind the building of houses.

The ABC regularly uses terms such as ‘peace activist’ or ‘human right activist’ to describe Israel’s trenchant critics; however, supporters of Israel are more likely to be described as members of the pro-Israel lobby. According to the ABC, Jerusalem is holy to Muslims and to Christians. That is absolutely right, but what about the Jews?

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Can the ABC have another look at the ways that matters Jewish, Israeli and Middle East are reported to the Australian people?

**Answer:**

The ABC does not believe that the selective list of examples provided by Senator Abetz is indicative of a pattern or display of “anti-Israel sentiment”.

To the extent that it is possible to identify the specific incidents or matters being complained of, the ABC provides the following information:

1. September 17 report on the EU declaration:

This story was an Agence France-Presse (AFP) copy, which was run, unchanged, by the ABC.

There are four instances in the story where inverted commas are used. If these are considered as a whole and the consistency of the article is taken into account, then it appears that AFP has used inverted commas in each case *not* to qualify or express doubt about the validity of the material contained within the inverted commas, but to indicate that this is a direct quote from the report. The ABC believes this is not an indication that the AFP report is in any way intending to cast doubt over the use of the term, merely to properly attribute it as a direct quote from the report.

2. Referring to Israel’s security barrier as a ‘wall’:

The Israeli Supreme Court has stated that the security barrier is a chain link fence for approximately 90% of its length and a prefabricated concrete wall for approximately 10% of its length. The Israeli Government has indicated that, when complete, the concrete section will be approximately 6% of the total length of the wall.

The International Court of Justice in its own judgement on the validity of the barrier has drawn no meaningful distinction between the terms “fence”, “wall” and “barrier” in this context, but chose to use “wall” as it was the term used by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The ABC has no editorial instruction on how to refer to the barrier, but there is nothing to indicate that we use the term “wall” in preference to any other term. Context is important: when speaking generically or broadly, “barrier” would appear to be the most generic term, but it is also important to note that specific stories about specific incidents will often refer to the barrier in a more specific way. In other words, if the barrier takes the form of either a fence or a wall at the particular place where an incident took place, it may be that the reference would reflect that.

While the barrier appears to be a fence for between 90% and 95% of its length, it is also worth noting that it tends to be a concrete wall on major highways and in built up urban areas.

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Rather than enforce only one way of referring to the barrier, the ABC accepts that specific context is relevant in each circumstance, and will happily investigate any specific story which is felt to be inappropriate.

A review of recent ABC coverage of stories relating to border security and Israel indicate that the barrier has been referred to in a number of ways:

- 18 October 2010: referred to as a “security barrier”
- 13 September 2010: referred to a “border fence”
- 17 August 2010: referred to a “border fence”
- 27 March 2010: referred to as a “border fence”.

3. Disputed territory or occupied territory:

The ABC is aware that these terms can be disputed and are open to interpretation, but notes that each instance is judged on its merits. The ABC can investigate any specific story which is considered inappropriate. However, a review of recent stories indicates that the ABC does not appear to favour one term over the other:

- 16, 22 and 23 March 2010 and 15 September 2010: referred to as “disputed territory”
- 29 July 2009, 21 March 2010 and 6 October 2010: referred to as “occupied territory”.

A review of recent ABC coverage of South Ossetia also does not reveal a consistent use of the term “occupied territory”.

4. Israeli vs Egyptian blockade:

A review of recent ABC coverage does not support the argument that the blockade of Gaza is always referred to as an Israeli blockade, even when it involves the border with Egypt.

ABC reports on 7 January, 1 and 14 June and on 8 and 15 July 2010, all identify Egypt’s actions and responsibilities in terms of its border with Gaza, and specifically the status of the Rafah crossing. Similarly, when the story relates to Israel’s blockade, and international criticism of it, it is appropriately reported.

5. 10 March Midday Report:

The ABC responded to a question on notice asked by Senator Birmingham at Budget Estimates 2010 (q041) on this issue.



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6. The use of terms such as “peace activist” and “human rights activist”:

ABC News considers use of the term ‘activist’ is appropriate in the context of a story for persons who take direct or specific action in support of a cause and that “militant” is appropriate when that direct action takes the form of warfare.

ABC News considers use of the term “terrorist” is appropriate where someone who engages in a specific form of militant activity which involves “terrorising” a community. For example a person who takes up arms against an occupying army can be classed a militant, however, a person who bombs a railway station of an enemy to terrorise the civilian population can be classed a terrorist.

The ABC believes that there no pattern or evidence of bias in its reporting.

7. Jerusalem a holy city to all:

The ABC has examined recent stories which reference Jerusalem as a holy city and considers that the stories make reference to multiple faiths.

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**Question No: 158**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 10**

**Topic: ABC *Lateline* – Baida Poultry**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

There was a program on ABC *Lateline* in recent times on Baida Poultry. Did the ABC film the footage that was shown?

If it was not ABC footage, what steps did the ABC take to ensure that it was legally obtained? If it was illegally obtained by a hidden camera, I would ask, Mr Scott, why you would have approved it?

**Answer:**

The footage was not shot by the ABC. The footage was obtained by an outside source.

Steps were taken to ensure that the material was genuine and was able to be verified, and all material included in the story was subject to review by ABC Legal prior to being aired.

The company named in the story was approached and given the opportunity to respond to the matters raised in the story.

The ABC's Editorial Policies require any material obtained through the use *by the ABC* of a hidden camera to be approved by the Managing Director prior to broadcast. As this material was not filmed by ABC, it was not required to be approved by the Managing Director prior to broadcast.

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**Question No: 159**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 10-11, 17**

**Topic: ABC's *Science Show***

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Bob Ward was interviewed to criticise a work of Professor Carter. What are Mr Ward's qualifications to do so and does he have any peer-reviewed publications on climate change in any academic scientific journals?

In the promo for this segment Ward was quoted as saying it was 'the worst paper ever published on the subject'. How often was that promo played around Australia?

What did Mr Ward actually critique and why on that program?

What sort of editorial policy was used to allow that to be used in a promo?

**Answer:**

Bob Ward is Policy and Communications Director at the Grantham Institute, a group lead by Lord Nicholas Stern at the London School of Economics. He is involved in research and analysis of publications by climate sceptics and was invited on to the program to share his views on publications which purport to be the basis of scepticism about climate change.

A "continuity" – a spoken piece inserted before a program or news break to tell the audience about an upcoming program – was broadcast for 30 seconds before the midday news to tell the audience about the upcoming program which begins after the news at 12.05pm. The quote was used in that one continuity.

ABC Radio is satisfied that the continuity was delivered in line with its brief to encourage audiences to stay on and tune into the program, and that it did not contravene ABC's Editorial Policies.

Mr Ward has undertaken systematic analysis of the published work of sceptical scientists and is of the view that those who seek to reinterpret the science of climate change often have very few papers published via peer review, a process which is designed to weed out experimental, unsubstantiated or sub-standard work, as opposed to books, articles and speeches which are not.

Mr Ward referred to this specific paper by Professor Carter as having numerous examples of inaccuracy, and said it was "the worst paper ever published on the subject [of climate change]". *The Science Show* invited Professor Carter to respond to this claim. He declined to do so but offered a written statement which was posted on the program's website. Presenter Robyn Williams told listeners about that invitation and Professor Carter's rejection of it, and were also invited to go to the website to read his statement alongside Bob Ward's critique.

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**Question No: 160**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 16-17**

**Topic: ABC Program *Compass***

**Senator Fierravanti- Wells asked:**

Was the ABC aware that Geraldine Doogue is a current board member of the St James Ethics Centre, an organisation which is currently seeking approval from the New South Wales government to have its ethics classes taught in New South Wales public schools?

On 12 September this year *Compass* ran a very complimentary story on the ethics classes, yet its presenter, Ms Doogue, did not mention that she was on the board of the St James Ethics Centre. Given her involvement and given the parameters of what is happening, should Ms Doogue have declared that association?

Can the ABC provide comments in relation to the Sydney Morning Herald article in the National Times on Ms Doogue and ethics classes? What action has the ABC taken-or, if no action has been taken in relation to Ms Doogue, what action does it intend to take?

**Answer:**

Ms Doogue notified *Compass* management that she was joining the St James Ethics Centre as a Board member when she joined the Centre in 2002.

In August 2010, Ms Doogue tendered her resignation from this position, to be effective from 2 December 2010.

Ms Doogue was not involved in any aspect of the production of this story from idea to finish, other than narrating it.

On 23 September 2010, after receipt of a viewer comment, ABC TV Management agreed that *Compass* should publish an online moderator comment.

On 30 September 2010 the following comment was posted online:

*“Moderator Comment: Geraldine Doogue is a volunteer member of the Board of St James Ethics Centre which prepared the curriculum for the Ethics Pilot program trialled in NSW public schools”.*

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Following receipt of 3 additional posts about this matter, on 4 November 2010, *Compass* amended its Moderator Comment to read:

*“Moderator Comment: Geraldine Doogue was a volunteer member of the Board of the St James Ethics Centre which prepared the curriculum for the Ethics Pilot program trialled in NSW public schools. She was not involved in any aspect of the production of this story: she did not suggest the story or advocate for it, she did not attend any of the story production meetings, she did not take part in the shoot and she was not involved in the writing or editing of the program. She only voiced the program. She did not write the words, and made no changes while her voice was being recorded. Geraldine has resigned as a volunteer member of the Board of the St James Ethics Centre, effective end of November, 2010.”*

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**Question No: 161**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 19**

**Topic: Climate Change Sceptics**

**Senator Cameron asked:**

Have any of the people who were named by Senator Abetz in relation to being dubbed climate sceptics (Dr Jennifer Marohasy or Professor Garth Paltridge) complained to the ABC?

**Answer:**

Neither Dr Jennifer Marohasy nor Professor Garth Paltridge have complained to the ABC about being called “climate sceptics”.

Dr Marohasy’s own website states that she “is sceptical of the consensus position on anthropogenic global warming”. The *Q&A* website included a link to Jennifer Marohasy’s website so that readers could review her biography, opinions and claims in detail (see <http://www.jennifermarohasy.com/>).

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**Question No: 162**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 19**

**Topic: State based Current Affairs Programs**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

In relation to state based current affairs television, what is the current funding level and how has that changed over the last couple of years?

In relation, to those state based current affairs television teams, have there been changes to staff numbers committed to them state by state or to staffing responsibilities?

**Answer:**

ABC resources and staff are shared in newsrooms across a range of functions. For example:

- different reporters in one newsroom may work across state and national news and state and national current affairs, and across radio, television and online.
- camera crews, editors and studio resources are shared and often used for multiple purposes at once.
- an interview may be done which is partly used for local TV news and partly for local current affairs coverage, for example.
- staff and resources which are notionally allocated to national television current affairs will also produce material for state based current affairs, and vice versa (eg. *Stateline* staff can and do produce material for programs like *Landline* from time to time, and *7.30 Report* staff produce material which runs on *Stateline*).

As a result of the ABC's deployment of desktop editing for reporters and studio automation which commenced in 2008, there has been an ABC-wide reduction in edit and studio staffing levels. . This reduction is related to these initiatives and has impacted on all areas of ABC news operation, with no particular focus on state-based television current affairs.

Since 2005, there have been no cuts to the editorial staff assigned to *Stateline* in each state, and no reduction in operating budgets that would affect the *Stateline* programs.



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**Question No: 163**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 22**

**Topic: ABC Program The Drum**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Can the ABC provide information around the cost structure of *The Drum* the overall budget and the range of fees that are paid for contributions and what type of retainers may exist?

**Answer:**

*The Drum* is produced by ABC's Innovation division.

As noted in ABC's response to q016 at Budget Estimates in May 2010, the budget of ABC's Innovation division in 2009/10 was \$9,640,120.

Contributions are a mix of unpaid or modestly paid pieces. Payment ranges from \$100 to \$500 per piece. The vast bulk are unpaid or in the \$100 - \$200 range. A small number of writers have retainer arrangements to write for ABC Online and to appear on ABC TV. They too are paid from the cash budget.

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**Question No: 164**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 21-22**

**Topic: ABC Online Program & OECD Report ‘Evolution of the News & The Internet’**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

In relation to the OECD Report can you provide information on the Report and the arguments for being in the online news space and provide copies of this report in response?

**Answer:**

The OECD Report ‘Evolution of News and the Internet’ (the Report) was released in March 2010.

The main discussion of Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) in the Report is found on pages 71–74 (under sub-heading ‘The role of public sector broadcasting in a digital news environment’, see attached). PSBs are also mentioned in brief throughout the survey chapters.

The Report is even-handed about public service broadcasting (PSB), noting that:

- PSBs are sometimes called PSMO (Public service media organisations) to reflect their increased role across platforms.
- PSBs can be prominent actors in online news ecosystem and are particularly important when commercial media is in “difficult times”.
- Limiting PSBs to broadcasting alone would limit their reach and effectiveness.
- The question is raised as to whether online expansion of PSBs is desirable and whether there should be rules for “fair competition” between commercial and PSB.

The Report effectively sets out two opposing points of view about the role of public sector broadcasting in a digital news environment:

- a) that PSBs are reliable and pluralistic news providers and there may be an increased role for PSBs in an online environment; and
- b) that PSBs are unfairly threatening commercial news operations and “crowding them out” of the online market.

The Report notes that this topic is complex and requires more study.

The report can be found online at:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/4171762/Evolution%20of%20News%20and%20the%20Internet.pdf> .

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**Question No: 165**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 24**

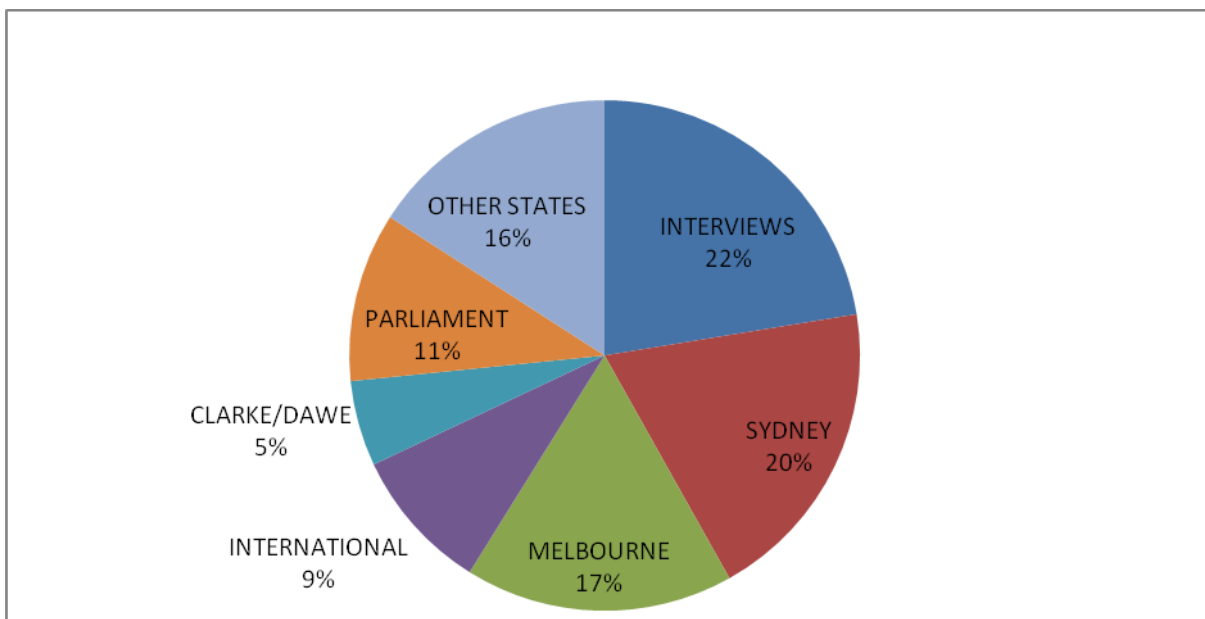
**Topic: ABC 7.30 Report**

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

I have heard that, currently, about 16 per cent of the airtime on *7.30 Report* covers stories from South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland. Is this correct?

**Answer:**

The figure of 16% was reported in an internal ABC News presentation in late 2009.



The majority of the *7.30 Report's* national reporters, which cover broad national stories, are based in Melbourne and Sydney.

Accordingly, while the stories from other states are usually specifically related to local issues, this is not true of the stories that are produced in Sydney and Melbourne.

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The announcement on 3 December 2010 that ABC will combine *The 7.30 Report* and *Stateline* into one new Monday-Friday program called *7.30* will provide a better blend of national and state current affairs, and will increase the opportunities for state-based current affairs stories to run outside their current home on Friday nights. It will also enable state-based current affairs teams to take over the 7.30 timeslot on other nights when the news agenda demands it. This should provide new opportunities for state-based current affairs. The change does not involve any loss of staff or resourced from state-based programs.

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**Question No: 166**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC Contractors**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Has the ABC ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.

Has the ABC ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

**Answer:**

The ABC has no record of contracting Shannon's Way, John Utting & UMR Research Group, McCann-Erickson, Ikon Communications or CMAX Communications.

Hawker Britton was contracted by ABCTV once, in March 2008 in relation to the program "Difference of Opinion". The value of the service was \$550.

ABC-TV contracted Cutting Edge for a range of programs over the past 11 years. Since January 2009, the ABC has spent \$48,000 with Cutting Edge.

The ABC has contracted Boston Consulting Group, to conduct operational efficiency reviews over the last 3 years. The ABC has paid \$3.7 million to Boston Consulting Group.

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The ABC contracted McKinsey & Company once in 1999. The cost of the contract was \$25,000.

The ABC is not currently considering contracting Hawker Britton, Shannon's Way, John Utting & UMR Research Group, McCann-Erickson, Cutting Edge, Ikon Communications, CMAX Communications or McKinsey & Company.

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**Question No: 167**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Media Subscriptions ABC**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Does the ABC subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.

Does the ABC subscribe to newspapers? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.

Does the ABC subscribe to magazines? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.

**Answer:**

The ABC does subscribe to Pay TV. The ABC subscribes to Pay TV for a number of reasons including:

- monitoring of other sources of News such as CNN and BBC World News for breaking stories and updates;
- provision of international Sports results;
- reviewing programming that might be suitable for the ABC to acquire; and
- keeping up to date on emerging bands and worldwide music trends.

The cost of the ABC's subscriptions to Foxtel, nationwide, for July-September 2010 was \$38,000.

The ABC purchases a number of local, national and international newspapers and magazines for the following reasons:

- source of information for program – such as topics for talkback radio, local interest stories, and items of interest;
- to keep abreast of what is happening in the media and entertainment industries in Australia and internationally;
- financial market information;
- program reviews;
- assist with research, case studies and keeping abreast of trends and innovations in media; and
- keep abreast of industry trends such as accounting, IT, legal and broadcast issues.

The ABC does not track costs of subscriptions to newspapers separately to the cost of subscriptions to magazines.

The cost of the ABC's newspaper and magazine subscriptions, nationwide, for the period July-September 2010 was \$197,000.

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**Question No: 168**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Advertising and Marketing ABC**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How much has the ABC spent on advertising and marketing since Budget Estimates? .

Could the ABC provide a complete list of current contracts. Please indicate the rationale for each service provided and its intended use.

What communications programs has the ABC undertaken since additional estimates and what communications programs are planned to be undertaken? For each program, what is the total spend?

**Answer:**

Advertising and promotions covers a range of items from catalogues, product launches, newsletters, presentations, reward vouchers, promotion of programs and channels.

Advertising and promotion is undertaken to inform and educate ABC audiences of ABC programs, services and products.

From June 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 the ABC spent approximately \$1,052,000 on online and traditional advertising and marketing initiatives including program and services launches, program promotions and promotions of events such as state and federal election coverage and audience research.

The ABC maximises its marketing activities through contractual relationships with its partners. As part of these contracts, ABC Commercial works closely with Roadshow (DVDs), HarperCollins Publishers Australia (ABC Books), Universal (ABC Music), BBC (DVDs), News (Delicious, Gardening Australia, Triple j magazine), Haymarket (Limelight) and Pascal Press (ABC Reading Eggs) to leverage related marketing and promotional opportunities, thereby supplementing its marketing expenditure.

In addition to these activities, ABC Commercial produces promotions for placement on ABC platforms (ABC Radio, ABC TV, ABC Online) which align with the programming content.

The ABC engages the services of outside entities to provide goods and services as and when required. Currently the ABC is contracted with Mitchells/eMitch, Raft Communications and Moon Communications Group.

ABC's Audience Research also has contracts with Oztam and Commercial Radio Australia.



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During the year, ABC Retail undertakes a number of major campaigns – including Christmas, Mothers Day, Fathers Day – where the relevant range of products in ABC Shops and ABC Shop Online are highlighted.

The ABC has not undertaken any government communications programs since additional estimates and does not have any government communications programs planned.

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**Question No: 169**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Staffing Levels – ABC**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What is the total expenditure on staffing for the ABC and for all portfolio agencies? What is the SES and non-SES breakdown?

What are the current staffing levels for SES and non-SES officers?

How many SES were employed in the ABC on 18 October 2010?

How many SES were employed in the ABC as of today?

What is the breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?

What is the gender breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?

What is the breakdown by location for each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?

What is the breakdown by each level of ongoing staff and non ongoing staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?

What has been the general staffing trend in the ABC since the 2007 election (for example SES numbers and recruitment has increased by X per cent because of Y).

What have been the changes in staffing levels since Budget Estimates 2010? Why have these changes occurred? What have been the Budgetary implications? In the case of reductions in staff numbers, how have these reductions been absorbed by the ABC? What functions these staff performed have been sacrificed and why?

Are there expected changes to current staffing levels over the next 12 months? If yes, provide details including a breakdown of each level staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band) detailing the changes. Will this be different to what was reported in the 2010-11 Budget?

Has there been a target for staff reductions to achieve savings? What is that target and what strategy is being implemented to achieve this? Will staff reductions be used to achieve the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend?

Have any voluntary or involuntary redundancies been offered to staff? If so, how have staff been identified for such offers? Are there such plans for the future?

How many permanent staff recruited since Budget Estimates 2010? What level are these staff? Where is their location?

Since Budget Estimates 2010, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the current efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts since Budget Estimate s2010? If so, where and at what level?

Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.

If the ABC has been identified in the 2010 election as delivering efficiencies (savings), how will these be delivered? (for example, savings commitments included reducing program funding, rationalising grants etc how will these impact the department and staffing)

What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions or increases are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

**Answer:**

**1. What is the total expenditure on staffing for the ABC and for all portfolio agencies? What is the SES and non-SES breakdown?**

The ABC does not use APS level classifications as its staff are not employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. The ABC uses Senior Executive and Non-Executive level classifications for its staff.

Total expenditure on staffing for the ABC in 2008/ 09 was \$428.4 million. The breakdown of which was Senior Executives - \$43.6 million and Non-Senior Executives - \$384.8 million.

**2. What are the current staffing levels for SES and non-SES officers?**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>
Senior Executive	335	323.07
Non-Senior Executive	5,159	4,273.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,494</b>	<b>4,596.54</b>

**3. How many SES were employed in the ABC on 18 October 2010?**

At October 2010, the ABC had 335 Senior Executives on staff.

**4. How many SES were employed in the ABC as of today?**

See above.

**5. What is the breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?**

See below.

**6. What is the gender breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?**

Headcount

<b>Senior Executive</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
SE Band 1	41	43	84
SE Band 2	68	88	156
SE Band 3	23	38	61
SE Band 4	4	12	16
Director	4	12	16
MD		1	1
Sub Total	140	195	335

<b>Program Maker, Technologist, Admin/Professional</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Band 1	21	15	36
Band 2	127	90	217
Band 3	234	140	374
Band 4	447	243	690
Band 5	442	346	788
Band 6	379	483	862
Band 7	363	518	881
Band 8	193	288	481
Band 9	85	115	200
Casual Fixed Pay	96	222	318
Sub Total	2,387	2,460	4,847

<b>Retail</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
HO Assistant1		1	1
HO Assistant2	2		2
HO Assistant3	1		1
HO Assistant5	4		4
HO Retail Mgr Lvl1	3		3
HO Retail Mgr Lvl2	1		1
HO Retail Mgr Lvl3	3	1	4
HO Retail Mgr Lvl4	4		4
Shop Assistant	194	45	239
Shop Manager Grade A	3		3
Shop Manager Grade B	1	3	4



Mgr2										
HO Retail Mgr3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
HO Retail Mgr4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Shop Assistant	94	49	46	14	19	8	9	0	0	239
Shop Mgr A	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Shop Mgr B	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4
Shop Mgr C	11	8	8	3	4	1	1	0	0	36
Shop Mgr D	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6
Stock Assistant	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Sub Total	133	60	56	17	24	11	11	0	0	312

Total	2,619	1,040	493	403	328	213	210	155	33	5,494
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**8. What is the breakdown by each level of ongoing staff and non ongoing staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?**

Senior Executive	Ongoing	Non-Ongoing	Total
SE Band 1	74	10	84
SE Band 2	145	11	156
SE Band 3	53	8	61
SE Band 4	12	4	16
Director	16	0	16
MD	0	1	1
Sub Total	301	34	335

Program Maker, Technologist, Admin/Professional	Ongoing	Non-Ongoing	Total
Band 1	12	24	36
Band 2	68	149	217
Band 3	215	159	374
Band 4	470	220	690
Band 5	643	145	788
Band 6	770	92	862
Band 7	816	65	881
Band 8	437	44	481
Band 9	173	27	200
Casual Fixed Pay	0	318	318
Sub Total	3,604	1,243	4,847

<b>Retail</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Non-Ongoing</b>	<b>Total</b>
HO Assistant1	1	0	1
HO Assistant2	2	0	2
HO Assistant3	1	0	1
HO Assistant5	3	1	4
HO Retail Mgr Lvl1	3	0	3
HO Retail Mgr Lvl2	1	0	1
HO Retail Mgr Lvl3	4	0	4
HO Retail Mgr Lvl4	4	0	4
Shop Assistant	129	110	239
Shop Manager Grade A	3	0	3
Shop Manager Grade B	4	0	4
Shop Manager Grade C	36	0	36
Shop Manager Grade D	6	0	6
Stock Assistant	0	4	4
Sub Total	197	115	312
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>5,494</b>

**9. What has been the general staffing trend in the ABC since the 2007 election (for example, SES numbers and recruitment has increased by X per cent because of Y).**

General staffing trend since 2007 election:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total	5,373	5,388	5,442

**10. What have been the changes in staffing levels since Budget Estimates 2010? Why have these changes occurred? What have been the Budgetary implications? In the case of reductions in staff numbers, how have these reductions been absorbed by the ABC? What functions these staff performed have been sacrificed and why?**

Changes in staffing levels have occurred due to the operational needs of the ABC. The net change in staff since Budget Estimates 2010 is 56.

**11. Are there expected changes to current staffing levels over the next 12 months? If yes, provide details including a breakdown of each level staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band) detailing the changes. Will this be different to what was reported in the 2010-11 Budget?**

No substantial changes are expected.

**12. Has there been a target for staff reductions to achieve savings? What is that target and what strategy is being implemented to achieve this? Will staff reductions be used to achieve the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend?**

There has been no target and there are no targets in place for staff reductions at the ABC.

**13. Have any voluntary or involuntary redundancies been offered to staff? If so, how have staff been identified for such offers? Are there such plans for the future?**

See ABC's response to Senator Barnett's question on notice from Budget Estimates 2010 (QON 37).

**14. How many permanent staff recruited since Budget Estimates 2010? What level are these staff? Where is their location?**

Ongoing staff recruited since Budget Estimates 2010:

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total
Senior Exec	3	1				1			5
Non Senior Exec	46	20	17	3	11	4	2	2	105
Total	49	21	17	3	11	5	2	2	110

**15. Since Budget Estimates 2010, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?**

Between 25 April 2010 to 7 November 2010, 709 employees have been employed on contract. The average length of their employment period is 159 days.

**16. Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the current efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts since Budget Estimate s2010? If so, where and at what level?**

As noted in previous Estimates responses, the ABC is not subject to the efficiency dividend.

**17. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.**

There are no plans for staff reductions.

**18. If the ABC has been identified in the 2010 election as delivering efficiencies (savings), how will these be delivered (for example, savings commitments included reducing program funding, rationalising grants etc how will these impact the department and staffing)?**

Not applicable.

**19. What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions or increases are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.**

There are no planned changes to existing graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs.



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**Question No: 170**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Government Payments of Accounts**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Has the ABC paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)? If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.

For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the ABC for the current financial year and the previous financial year?

Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

**Answer:**

The ABC set out its standard payment terms in response to Senator Birmingham's question on notice from Budget Estimates 2010 (QON39).

Between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010 (inclusive) the ABC made 613 payments to consultants and contractors. 522 payments or 85 per cent were paid on or before the due date.

Where payments were not made within the agreed or standard timeframe, it was due to issues such as late receipt of invoices, items in dispute or other issues relating to the supply of goods or services.

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**Question No: 171**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Audio Description Trial**

**Senator Fifield asked:**

I understand that the ABC is currently conducting, or has recently concluded conducting, a trial of Audio Description technology.

Is that the case and if so, please outline the scope of the trial and provide an indication of the results thus far?

What plans does the ABC have to introduce Audio Description technology for its

- broadcast content;
- DVD content; and
- online content?

What are the timelines associated with the ABC's audio description rollout plans?

Does the ABC believe it will need additional funding to introduce audio description for its television content?

What % of broadcast content would the ABC envisage audio describing?

**Answer:**

The ABC has discussed the possibility of conducting an audio description trial with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, subject to funding and available spectrum. The ABC refers to the Government's Media Access Review Final Report, released on 3 December 2010.

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**Question No: 172**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Travel Costs**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. The 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook detailed a whole-of-government coordinated procurement arrangements for travel and related services. How has this applied to the ABC? Please explain the changes that have occurred to the ABC in relation to its travel and related services.
2. Is purchasing of travel and related services less expensive under the new arrangements?
3. Is purchasing of travel and related services more efficient under the new arrangements?
4. Have savings been achieved in the ABC because of the new arrangements?
5. How much did the ABC spend on travel in 2008-09, 2009-10 and to date this financial year.
6. How have staff within the ABC found the new arrangements? For example is it more efficient to arrange travel?

**Answer:**

Qs1- 4 & 6: The Government's coordinated procurement arrangements for travel and related services do not apply to the ABC.

As a result, there have been no changes to the ABC in relation to its travel and related services since the release of the 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

Q5: Over the period 2008-09, 2009-10 and to date this financial year, the ABC has incurred \$17,999,827 on domestic and international travel.

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**Question No: 173**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Federal Election Coverage**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Can you explain the ABC's decision to re-evaluate its election coverage following the blog post by Greg Jericho?

**Answer:**

The ABC constantly monitors complaints, audience comment and reaction, public criticism and "share of voice" and balance in relation to its election coverage.

This monitoring is then provided to news management and broader ABC management, and informs the Corporation's thinking about its coverage. Inevitably, the feedback the ABC receives is taken into account as part of normal practice.

In the case of comments made by Greg Jericho, these were specifically raised in management discussions as they reflected a broader view being expressed in a range of areas about a lack of policy focus in the election campaign and in the media's coverage of the election campaign.

As the Managing Director noted in his speech at the 2010 Melbourne Writer's Festival:

*"At the ABC, we identified that the dynamic political news was crowding out proper reporting of policy initiatives in some news bulletins[during the election] – and that we needed to allocate more time to reporting some of these issues properly. We adjusted our strategy as we listened to critics, our audiences - and critiqued our own coverage. Politics and policy are not binary choices. We need to do both.*

*The contributions of bloggers – the constant feedback and commentary of thousands though the #ausvotes stream on Twitter – were watched and considered by every mainstream media editor. And we could see – the impact made by some bloggers was every bit as great as that made by other mainstream professional journalists."*

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**Question No: 174**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC Innovation Department**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

*Bluebird AR*

1. Does the ABC consider this project to have been successful and how was this result measured?
2. What was the total project cost of the Bluebird Alternate reality drama (including development, staff costs, marketing etc)?
3. Of the names listed on the Bluebird credits page, how many of these people received payment for their services?
4. What was the size of the Australian audience that participated in the program by registering on the Dashboard Collective?
5. What methods were taken to ensure the security of the personal data stored by the ABC on the Dashboard Collective?
6. Is this consistent with the data collection methods across the ABC?
7. What steps have been taken to prevent future disclosure of personal information on ABC sites and projects?
8. Why didn't the ABC publish an apology on the project website or in the news following the publication of users' sensitive data?

*Mobile applications for the 2010 election*

9. How much did the ABC spend on the development of its election applications for each mobile platform?
10. What date were these applications officially launched?
11. How many times was each version of the election application downloaded?
12. How often were these applications promoted in ABC broadcasts in conjunction with Apple products (ie. iPhone and iPad)?

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**Answer:**

*Bluebird AR*

1. The ABC's Bluebird project had several aims:
  - to explore an innovative new form of storytelling and learn the lessons on how to utilise this format; and
  - to educate audiences about geo-engineering through an alternate reality narrative.

When measured by audience numbers to the various Bluebird sites, audience feedback on the experience of the game and press coverage received for the project, the project can be regarded as a success.

2. The total cost of the Bluebird Alternate reality drama was \$300,000, including marketing.
3. The internal ABC staff members listed on the Bluebird credits page were paid their normal salaries during this period. The actors and other production companies were paid for their services. The 3D rotoscoping was done by an intern.
4. The number of Australians who registered on the Dashboard Collective website was 880.
5. While the Bluebird AR site was live, usernames, passwords, email addresses and personally identifiable information for registered players were encrypted using an https security protocol and held on a secure server. During this period, it was not possible for any member of the public to access personally identifiable information and the data was secure.
6. After the game was finished, the ABC team created an archive of the site so that users could revisit it if they missed it, and industry players could learn about this alternate reality game. During this archiving process, the Dashboard Collective application was migrated from its secure server and converted into a downloadable AIR application for users to download to their computers.

During the course of this migration process the file containing user data was not removed from the application and this error was not detected before the application went live. As a result, a file containing personal details of users was available to the public. During this period, there were three downloads, two of which were from Senator Abetz' office (who alerted the ABC to this problem).

The secure handling of user information during the live period of the game is consistent with data collection methods across the ABC. The migration from the secure server was not consistent with usual ABC practices.

7. An internal investigation was immediately conducted and has led to revised security and testing procedures for any downloadable applications.

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8. The ABC sent individual apologies and notifications to all affected users and responded to queries to them individually. The ABC assessed the level of risk to users and, given the small number of downloads, the fact that the passwords were no longer valid, and the lack of any financial or credit card information, considered it overall to be fairly low. The ABC decided that individual apologies to users were appropriate in the circumstances. Given each user was contacted individually, a public apology was not required.

*Mobile applications for the 2010 election*

9. The ABC paid a total of AU\$18,950 to cover the development of four applications (iPhone, Android, Java and BlackBerry) plus up to three months hosting.
10. The iPhone application went live on 26 July 2010, the Android application on 3 August 2010, the Java application on 10 August 2010 and the BlackBerry application went live on 17 August 2010.
11. The iPhone application was downloaded (via iTunes App Store) 55,102 times and the Android application (via Android Market) 1,686 times. The Java and BlackBerry applications were hosted and distributed via our external developer and the number of downloads is unknown.
12. The Australia Votes 2010 mobile applications were not promoted on ABC Radio or ABC Television promotions in conjunction with any Apple products, either verbally or visually. The ABC Local Radio promotion script was:

*“Keep up to date with the results as they unfold on election night with an ABC election mobile application. The ABC has a range of apps for different devices. Find out more at [abc.net.au/mobile](http://abc.net.au/mobile).”*

The ABC Television promotion showed no Apple devices (just a graphic of an unbranded, generic mobile handset) and the script was:

*“Australia Votes 2010. Coverage everywhere that counts. ABC News 24, Lateline, Insiders, Midday Report, Lateline Business, The 7.30 Report, ABC News Breakfast, AM, PM, The World Today, on my phone, podcasts, the ABC app, Twitter, [abc.net.au/elections](http://abc.net.au/elections), The Drum, ABC Campaign Pulse, blogs. Coverage everywhere that counts.”*

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**Question No: 175**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC NewsRadio 12 October 2010**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Were the remarks scripted in the preface to the interview with Tony Abbott, describing the interviewer as a “Liberal Party backer”?

If not, was this simply the newsreader’s opinion and what did she seek to infer by this remark?

**Answer:**

This excerpt of an interview between Sydney based Macquarie broadcaster Alan Jones and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott was broadcast nationally on ABC NewsRadio.

The exchange was broadcast by ABC NewsRadio because Mr Abbott had not at the time spoken to other media outlets on this newsworthy issue.

While Mr Jones is well known to Sydney audiences, where he broadcasts his own program on 2GB, it was felt that an introduction giving some context to the interviewer and the tenor of the exchange was necessary for a national audience.

Mr Jones has had a very public association with the Liberal Party going back many decades. He was a speech writer for former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, a candidate for Liberal Party pre-selection, and a frequent host of highly publicised Liberal Party events.

The transcript of the program (attached) indicates the exchange was far from a conventional political interview of the style with which ABC NewsRadio audiences would be familiar. Given Mr Jones made personal statements and direct criticisms of the Prime Minister, rather than simply asking questions of Mr Abbott, ABC NewsRadio considered it appropriate to ensure the audience understood the context of the interview they were about to hear.



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Transcript

TONY ABBOTT: I am going to respond very vigorously if people tell lies about me and the problem was that the Prime Minister knew full well that I had every intention of going. The trip was arranged and for her office to brief that I'd somehow snubbed the troops by not going with her was just absolutely wrong and it was low.

ALAN JONES: The intention was to create the impression that a visit to Afghanistan was a high priority for her and a low priority for you. You're more interested in attending the Conservative Party conference in the UK, her words, "I extended the invitation to Tony Abbott to accompany me. I thought it was a good way to indicate bipartisanship. He made difference arrangements." In other words, she was the one most concerned with the welfare of the troops.

TA: Well, that's right. But you know in the end, Alan, the problem with all of this argy bargy is that it embroils what should be a mission which is universally supported in a whole lot of unnecessary controversy.

AJ: Well, I think the issue is higher than that. The issue to the people now is that there is a Prime Minister who for political advantage will lie and you're the casualty.

TA: And this is the tragedy that here we have troops in Afghanistan who are doing a very good job under very tough circumstances and they don't deserve to have all this political argy bargy started by the Prime Minister clouding public perceptions of their mission.

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**Question No: 176**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC 720 host, Geoff Hutchison's twitter comments**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Was Mr Hutchison ever asked to apologise to Mr Abbott following his offensive comments posted on Twitter prior to polling day? If not, why not?

What steps were taken by the ABC to ensure Mr Hutchison does not damage the ABC's reputation with remarks like this in the future?

**Answer:**

Mr Hutchinson offered an apology to Mr Abbott in an email to a member of Mr Abbott's staff. The apology was acknowledged by that staff member.

Mr Hutchinson was found to be in breach of the ABC's Use of Social Media Policy and was reminded of his obligations under that policy. He was instructed to close this personal Twitter account on the basis that its name gave the impression that it was an official ABC account.

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**Question No: 177**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC Technology and Games**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Can you explain the decision behind dedicating a new section of the ABC website to technology and games news that is already published in other sections?

Can you explain the reason for the delays in launching the ABC technology and games section?

Is there any automation involved in the publication of content on this portal or is it manually sourced and added?

**Answer:**

The ABC is aware of the increase in popularity of technology and games in recent years. For this reason it has created unique programming such as *Good Game*, focussing on this subject matter and catering for a distinct audience. Given the success of *Good Game*, the ABC considered there was a market for a technology and games portal which would engage both a younger audience and those interested in technology and games.

Additionally, the ABC recognised that online users often visited ABC websites seeking specific or subject based information and the ABC site is traditionally structured according to broadcast programs, rather than subject matter. This made it difficult for users to find the content they were seeking.

As a result, the ABC created an alternative subject-based navigation. This 'aggregation' process has delivered a number of subject portals, including ABC Science, Health, Sport, Indigenous, Arts, Religion and Ethics, and now the Technology and Games portal. Each of these sites contains content aggregated from the ABC's disparate program and news sub-sites. Technology is obviously an area of ongoing interest to internet users.

The ABC announced work on two aggregation sites at roughly the same time. Religion and Ethics portal was given development priority over the Technology and Games portal as ABC Innovation did not have the specialist developer staff to build both portals at once.

The ABC's aggregation project is powered by a Content Aggregation Tool which creates automated feeds of content from across the ABC using metadata. However aggregation portals are also watched by editorial staff, which monitor and remove inaccurate results (so called "false positives"). These staff also commission and create unique and original content for subject portals including the Technology and Games Portal.

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**Question No: 178**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Outsourcing of ABC Resources**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Does the ABC outsource resources from other television networks?

If so, which networks and at what cost to the Australian taxpayer?

Do ABC and ABC24 send separate reporters to cover events in other regions?

**Answer:**

ABC Resources does conduct business with independent production companies who require access to television production facilities. These independent production companies generally produce content for television networks (including the ABC) and Pay TV operators.

ABC Resources' clients have included Freemantle Media, Shine, Southern Star, Granada Television, GNW Productions, and Global Television (Fox Sports).

The ABC does not incur any costs undertaking these activities as they are recovered 100 per cent through the commercial arrangement. Any revenue made is returned to the ABC for internal program making.

In the News Division, the ABC has contracts with some international television broadcasters and agencies, including the BBC, APTN and Reuters, for the provision of news vision and other news material.

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**Question No: 179**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC Breakfast TV 26 October 2010**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Can you confirm that a comment was made on ABC Breakfast TV on 26/10/2010 implying that it was unfortunate that the shoe thrown at The Hon John Howard AC missed its mark?

Who said this and in what context?

**Answer:**

The Executive Producer of News Breakfast is unaware of any such comment.

The Producer of ABC News Breakfast has carefully reviewed the program and has been unable to locate any example of anyone on the program suggesting it was unfortunate that the shoe missed its mark.

During the broadcast, there were instances where the fact that the shoe did miss its mark was noted, and there was an element of light-hearted discussion in some of the exchanges. The examples the ABC are aware of are listed here:

1. During Virginia Trioli's interview with Peter Gray (the shoe-thrower), Virginia says: "You weren't a very good shot."  
Peter Gray replies: "I challenge you to do any better."  
Virginia Trioli replies: "No, that's something that I would definitely not engage in."
2. Virginia quotes an email from a viewer - "Richard Campbell says: Our former prime minister seems to lack the street smarts of the former US president George W Bush when faced with a flying shoe. W had enough experience to know that if one shoe is thrown then another one follows."  
Virginia then commented: "Although it has to be said that it was a rather pathetic lob across the studio and went nowhere near him."
3. Other viewer emails which were read out on air included the following:  
"Waste of time. Howard didn't even answer the question from Hicks; he didn't really answer questions relating to Tampa. And with such a lame throw of the shoe."

The ABC believes none of these comments indicate a disappointment that the shoe "missed its mark", rather they provide context and clarify that the incident had no physical impact on Mr Howard.

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**Question No: 180**

**Hansard Ref: EC 22 & 25, 27 October 2010 and In Writing**

**Topic: Audience participation on Q&A**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Was the ABC aware that Peter Gray is a serial activist before he was admitted into the audience for the episode of Q&A on 25 October 2010?

If not, why not?

If so, on what basis did the ABC decide to admit him as a member of the Q&A audience on 25 October 2010?

In relation to audience participation on Q&A, is it okay for a member of a political party to be in the audience but not okay for someone who may well be a member of a political party but also working as political staffer to attend?

What background checks do the ABC do on people prior to their audience participation on Q&A and does stuff like that matter?

Please document any criteria upon which the ABC bases any decision to exclude, prioritise or rank against others, or include, an individual as an audience member for any particular Q&A program.

**Answer:**

The ABC was unaware of Peter Gray before he was admitted into the audience for the episode of Q&A on 25 October 2010.

The Q&A audience is intended to represent a diversity of Australian citizens and their views. We ask a range of questions of registrants' backgrounds including age, gender, voting intention and party membership. We use that information not to exclude or rank registrants, but to produce a diverse audience.

Q&A allows party members to attend in the audience though we monitor their numbers. In March 2010, a staff member for the then Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Apprenticeships and Training attended Q&A as an audience member and asked a panellist a question. Q&A has since tightened its selection procedures on the basis that questions to panellists asked by political staffers may give the impression that politicians could, through their staff, seek to influence the Q&A agenda.

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**Question No: 181**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: ABC Employees on leave without pay**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Are any ABC employees on leave without pay and working under the MOPS (Members of Parliament Staff) Act?

If yes, how many?

Where are they employed?

**Answer:**

No.