

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2013
Communications Portfolio
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 117

Program No. ABC

Hansard Ref: Page 43 (19/11/2013)

Topic: Q&A Website Content

Senator Ruston asked:

Can I just quickly move on to the content on your website. I refer to the tweet that stayed on there for quite a number of hours that referred to a sexual act in the same context as our Prime Minister. Could you advise us of what measures you have put in place subsequent to that to ensure that this sort of inappropriate material is not again seen on a taxpayer-funded website?

Answer:

The tweet referred was a tweet published by a user on Twitter. The *Q&A* site features a tool that searches Twitter for #QandA tweets, much like a search engine such as Google, and displays them on screen.

The ABC makes it clear on the *Q&A* page that this particular content is coming from outside the ABC and warns users that, as a result, the twitter feed may contain some offensive content. The search tool uses an obscene word filter to exclude some tweets but this does not prevent offensive tweets that don't use obscene words.

This particular tweet was one of 15,000 tweets accessible through the *Q&A* website because it included the #QandA hashtag. It was not chosen, highlighted or promoted in any way by *Q&A* or the ABC.

As soon as *Q&A* was alerted to the existence of this tweet, the ABC blocked the tweet so that it would no longer be accessible through the *Q&A* site.