

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: 125

Program No. ABC

Hansard Ref: Page 51 (19/11/2013)

Topic: Video journalists

Senator Ruston asked:

Senator RUSTON: On a more specific area: when we were talking in estimates earlier this year we discussed the cessation of news services by WIN TV in South Australia. We were discussing that the ABC had taken up the mantle of putting video journalists into regional and rural areas. I am wondering how far that has progressed. I know there is a video journalist who has been based at the ABC in Renmark, but I wondered whether that program has expanded.

Mr Scott: I can get that on notice for you.

Senator RUSTON: I would be interested in knowing how far you have got and what your plans for the future are in that particular area, particularly in relation to rural and regional news and sport exposure.

Answer:

Through the federal funding announced in early 2013, ABC News has been able to build on its commitment to news coverage in rural and regional Australia.

Video journalists have been placed in Renmark, Bunbury and Newcastle. In the relatively short time they have been operating, all three video journalists have filed a consistent stream of original, local journalism that serves both their local communities as well as national audiences via ABC News Online and radio current affairs.

Camera operator positions have been created in Wollongong, Broome and Alice Springs, to bolster the ABC's capacity to record and send back footage from regional and remote areas.

Additionally, funding has been invested in equipment such as camera, editing and live linking technology, for 19 regional offices around Australia. This investment is an important step forward in expanding the ABC's newsgathering capacity beyond capital city newsrooms.

In terms of future planning for regional news coverage, the ABC will continue to train and support the regional video journalists and camera operators, to ensure they are providing their communities and broader ABC audiences with quality, local journalism.

In 2014, there will also be a strong focus on follow-up training for staff in the 19 regional offices that received cameras, editing software and live linking technology. The aim over time is to ensure these staff are well-equipped to use the gear to cover both breaking news and feature stories in their communities.