

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 84**

**Topic: So-called war on terror**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—... To start off with, did the ABC have a view about using the phrase ‘so-called war on terror’?

**Mr Scott**—Let me check that.

**Senator ABETZ**—Because I thought it had been agreed that that term, prefaced with ‘so-called’, would not be used.

**Mr Scott**—Do you have an example that has come to your attention?

**Senator ABETZ**—Yes, I do—the 8 am news on Radio National this morning. I did not hear it, but I have an email from a colleague that raises it, and in that email my colleague said, ‘I thought the ABC got in trouble for saying this last year.’

**Mr Scott**—I have advice from our style guide, which asks journalists to take care when the using the term ‘so-called’—it can carry negative connotations. It is not as though it is an overarching ban, but our journalists are encouraged to take care when using the expression, but I can investigate that example. You said you had not heard it. I did not hear it either, but I can investigate it for you.

**Senator ABETZ**—It was 8 am this morning, Monday the 20th.[NB – Sen Abetz later advised it was actually the 19<sup>th</sup>]

**Answer:**

After a search of transcripts of Radio National news bulletins between 18 and 20 October 2008, ABC News has found no reference to ‘so-called war on terror’.

The ABC News Style Guide advises that the term ‘so-called’ should be used with care.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 85**

**Topic: Q&A**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—How do you do that? Can you go through every specific way that you try to get people into your audience?

**Mr Scott**—I can come back to you in writing on that, but a number of different strategies were tried to draw audience members out. I am happy to provide you with details. A number of members on your own side of the House would be able to provide you with advice on that too, because they were involved in that process.

**Senator ABETZ**—Do you also ask Labor and Greens politicians to provide audiences?

**Mr Scott**—I am not aware of that but, on the data that we provided you with, we were aware that we were keen to recruit more people to come into the studio audience who were coalition supporters, clearly.

**Senator ABETZ**—Yes, but how are you doing that other than asking some Liberal politicians?

**Mr Scott**—There have been a range of activities.

**Senator ABETZ**—All right, which are?

**Mr Scott**—We have contacted various law and accounting firms and business groups, such as the Australian Retailers Association, the Sydney Chamber of Commerce and a number of other local chamber groups; a number of other organisations, such as the Australian Christian Lobby, the Australian Family Association, Rotary and Probus clubs, student groups from various universities. We have contacted politicians and political parties, including the Liberal Party of New South Wales, the Young Liberals and every state Liberal MP within one hour's drive of the ABC studio. So we can demonstrate that we have tried a number of different things to try to ensure that we have all the viewpoints represented in the audience, and I think we have. ...

**Senator ABETZ**—Can you let me know exactly what groups have been contacted in relation to this?

**Mr Scott**—Yes.

**Answer:**

The Q&A program is extensively and regularly promoted on all ABC platforms. Promotions direct people to the website to register.

In addition to the list of groups provided at the hearing, the producers of Q&A have contacted the following between May and October 2008 in order to recruit more Coalition supporters:

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

- Student groups, including the Sydney University Politics Society, the Australian Union of Jewish Students and the Macquarie University Liberal Club;
- firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young, Maleson Stephen Jaques, and Brown Wright Stein;
- business groups, including the Sydney Chamber of Commerce and a variety of local chambers;
- facebook groups such as "Don't blame me I voted Liberal", "Liberal voters are legends", "Liberal party of Australia" and "2010 Liberal";

The producers of Q&A also regularly liaise with schools, councils and clubs as points of community contact to seek audience members. Contacts have included:

Abbotsleigh School for Girls, Knox Grammar, Barker College, Marist College North Shore, Moriah College, Masada College, Al Zahra College, Gallipoli Mosque, Gosford City Council, Wyong City Council, St Joseph's Catholic High School, Kiama Independent newspaper, Liverpool Liberals, South Sydney High, Holsworthy High School, All Saints Liverpool, Randwick Girls High, Randwick Boys High, Matraville High, Clovelly Childcare, Tara Anglican School, St Paul's Wahroonga, Knox School, Marist College, Baulkham Hills Shire, Auburn Council, Western Sydney Community Forum, Al Faisal College, Auburn Council, Cabramatta Community Centre, ANU Students' Association, Christ Church St Ives, Business and Professional Women Australia, Tara Anglican Girls, Kambala School, Northern Beaches Christian School, Freshwater Senior Campus, Mackellar Girls Campus, Sutherland Shire Christian School, Australasian Union of Students, St Ives Rotary, Pymble Golf Club, Masada College, Ku-rin-gai Creative Arts High School, Turrumurra High, St Stephens, St Andrews Wahroonga, OLQP Catholic School, Holy Parish Wahroonga, Fox Valley Seventh Day Adventist Community Church, St John's Uniting Church of Wahroonga, Macquarie University Debating Society, Sydney University Debating Team, MLC Centre, Humanities Department at UTS and Waverley Council.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 86**

**Topic: Lachlan Harris**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—I want to go to question 55—and a written answer was provided to that—at the last estimates, in which I specifically asked:

*Does the ABC acknowledge that Mr Lachlan Harris blocked the path of an ABC cameraperson from being allowed into the ABC radio studio?.....*

**Senator ABETZ**—Where is the detail of whether Mr Harris blocked or did not block in that answer?

**Mr Scott**—The cameraman was advised by the Prime Minister's media adviser that the interview would not be conducted, and discussions were subsequently held. It does not have detail about blocking.

**Senator ABETZ**—Right. I am now asking for the detail because I asked specifically—

**Mr Scott**—'Blocked the path'. All right.

**Answer:**

The ABC's cameraman was not "blocked" from entering the Radio National studio. There was no physical obstruction.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 87**

**Topic: Lachlan Harris**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**— I want to ask, in relation to question 56, Mr Scott, about your involvement with this Lachlan Harris incident.

**Mr Scott**—Yes.

**Senator ABETZ**—You said:

The issue was discussed with the Managing Director shortly after the incident ...

**Mr Scott**—Yes.

**Senator ABETZ**—What does ‘shortly after’ mean? Was it on the same day?

**Mr Scott**—No, I do not think it was.

**Senator ABETZ**—Can you get me the exact date, please?

**Answer:**

As advised in the answer to question 56 from the May Budget Estimates, the issue was drawn to the attention of the Managing Director shortly after the incident. Because it was in the way of a conversation rather than a formal briefing, no exact date can be confirmed.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 88**

**Topic: Forestry issues**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—But I asked, ‘Has the journalist been taken off forestry issues?’

**Mr Scott**—The journalist has left the ABC.

**Senator ABETZ**—Right. Was she taken off forestry issues prior to her departure?

**Mr Scott**—I am not aware of that.

**Senator ABETZ**—Well, can you please find out for me—take it on notice?

**Answer:**

No.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 89**

**Topic: Radio National audiences**

**Senator Eggleston asked:**

**Senator EGGLESTON**—Is this of the total ABC audience?

**Mr Scott**—No, this is of the total radio listening audience. I am not sure about the—

**Senator EGGLESTON**—Just the ABC audience?

**Mr Scott**—I would have to get that and come back to you on that.

**Senator EGGLESTON**—If you would. I would be very interested.

**Answer:**

Radio National's 2008 year-to-date audience share of all radio listening is 2.2% across the five mainland State capitals. ABC Radio's overall 2008 year-to-date share in the same market is 21.2%.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 90**

**Topic: Religion programs**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

**Mr Scott**—Yes. We can give an outline of the Radio National schedule, but there are still a number of key religion programs that are going to air.

**Senator MINCHIN**—Yes. I think it would be helpful if we had a fact sheet.

**Mr Scott**—Including *Encounter*, which is actually a higher rating program than the *Religion Report*.

**Senator MINCHIN**—Right.

**Mr Scott**—We can give an outline to the committee.

**Senator MINCHIN**—That would be useful.

**Mr Scott**—Yes.

**Answer:**

The ABC recognises the role played by religion and religious beliefs in the lives of the majority of Australians. While *The Religion Report* has been discontinued, a number of other programs will continue to be produced by the ABC's religious radio unit including *The Spirit of Things*, the award-winning *Encounter* program and *The Rhythm Divine*, all broadcast on Radio National; *For the God Who Sings* on ABC Classic FM and John Cleary's *Sunday Night* program on ABC Local Radio.

Religion remains a cornerstone of ABC Radio National's output which will continue to feature 2.5 hours of religious content on radio weekly, complemented by other religious output on ABC Radio and ABC TV, including *Songs of Praise* and *Compass*, the only prime time television program dedicated to religion and spirituality screened by any Australian TV network.

Also, the ABC has recognised for some time the need for a greater amount of original content relating to religion on ABC Online. The limited amount of content relating to the impact of religion and beliefs on contemporary Australian society that has been commissioned and included on the ABC's "Unleashed" site has received a very positive response from audiences. Radio National is keen to develop more content relating to religion in this area. A new online site providing a gateway for all religious content on the ABC is under development.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**SPECIALIST PROGRAMS ON ABC RADIO NATIONAL**

In 2009 ABC Radio National will continue to feature over 40 specialist programs including the following by specialist areas:

**1. Arts Performance**

Airplay  
Book Reading  
Comedy  
First Person  
Poetica  
Short Story

**2. Arts Talk and Coverage**

Artworks  
AWAYE! (specialist Indigenous arts)  
The Book Show  
Lingua Franca  
MovieTime

**3. History**

Hindsight  
Life and Times  
Rear Vision  
Verbatim

**4. Law**

The Law Report

**5. News, Topical Affairs including Commentary (Politics, Economics, Social, Philosophy etc)**

Asia Pacific  
Australia Talks  
Background Briefing  
Big Ideas  
The Boyer Lectures  
Breakfast  
Counterpoint  
Late Night Live  
The National Interest  
Saturday Extra  
also: AM, The World Today, PM, Correspondents Report (ex ABC News)

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**5. Music Programs (Performance and Talk)**

The Daily Planet  
Into The Music  
Music Deli  
The Music Show  
The Night Air  
Singers of Renown  
Sound Quality  
The Weekend Planet  
Quiet Space

**6. Religion**

Encounter  
The Rhythm Divine  
The Spirit of Things

**7. Rural**

Bush Telegraph  
Country Breakfast

**8. Science, Design and Philosophy**

All in the Mind  
By Design  
The Health Report  
Ockham's Razor  
The Philosopher's Zone  
The Science Show

**9. Social Issues**

Life Matters

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 91**

**Topic: Suspension of ABC journalist**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

**Senator BIRMINGHAM**—When was the last time that a journalist or on-air personality was suspended?

**Mr Scott**—I would have to come back to you on that.

**Answer:**

On 13 September 2007.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 92**

**Topic: Peter Lloyd**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

What costs were incurred by the ABC in providing legal and other support to Peter Lloyd in Singapore?

Was Peter Lloyd on holiday at the time of his apprehension by Singaporean authorities?

Is it normal practice for the ABC to provide legal and other support to employees apprehended in foreign countries whilst on holiday?

If not, why was this assistance provided?

What was the cost incurred by the ABC associated with legal representation and the like in relation to Mr Lloyd's apprehension?

**Answer:**

The ABC incurred \$36,243 in external legal costs, and has spent \$11,200 for counselling sessions for Peter Lloyd and family.

At the time of his arrest, Peter Lloyd was on annual leave and was at the end of his posting as an ABC correspondent in New Delhi.

The ABC has not previously experienced a situation where an employee has been apprehended in a foreign country while on holiday, and accordingly, there is no 'normal practice'.

Additional costs incurred by the ABC associated with legal representation and the like were \$18,427 in travel and accommodation costs.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 93**

**Topic: Q&A**

**Senator Abetz asked:**

At the conclusion of each episode of Q & A could the ABC please list which of the invited panellists who were given the final comment?

Please provide the nominated voting preference of the audience for each episode of Q&A subsequent to subsequent to 3 July 2008.

**Answer:**

The final comment in each episode of Q&A 2008 was provided by the panellists listed below:

Episode 1	Kevin Rudd (only panellist)
Episode 2	Tanya Plibersek
Episode 3	Tony Burke
Episode 4	Kate Crawford
Episode 5	Christopher Pyne
Episode 6	Tim Blair
Episode 7	Nicola Roxon
Episode 8	Andrew Bolt
Episode 9	Angela Shanahan
Episode 10	Nick Xenophon
Episode 11	Tim Wilson
Episode 12	Peter Garrett
Episode 13	Greg Sheridan
Episode 14	Blanche d'Alpuget
Episode 15	John Pilger
Episode 16	Jane Caro
Episode 17	Nick Minchin
Episode 18	Maxine McKew
Episode 19	Malcolm Turnbull (only panellist)
Episode 20	David Marr

The nominated voting preference of audience members follows. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Episode 8 – 10 July

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	11
ALP	26
GREENS	11
OTHER	1
UNSPECIFIED	51

Episode 9 – 17 July

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	23
ALP	25
GREENS	18
OTHER	2
UNSPECIFIED	32

Episode 10 – 24 July

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	21
ALP	32
GREENS	14
OTHER	3
UNSPECIFIED	30

Episode 11 – 31 July

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	20
ALP	31
GREENS	15
OTHER	1
UNSPECIFIED	32

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Episode 12 – 7 August

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	13
ALP	42
GREENS	15
OTHER	1
UNSPECIFIED	29

EP 13 – 14 August

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	22
ALP	30
GREENS	26
OTHER	2
UNSPECIFIED	20

Episode 14 – 21 August

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	22
ALP	35
GREENS	19
OTHER	6
UNSPECIFIED	18

Episode 15 – 28 August

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	27
ALP	40
GREENS	22
OTHER	7
UNSPECIFIED	4

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Episode 16 – 4 September

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	31
ALP	36
GREENS	17
OTHER	2
UNSPECIFIED	13

Episode 17 – 11 September

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	21
ALP	43
GREENS	21
OTHER	1
UNSPECIFIED	14

EP 18 – 18 September

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	26
ALP	39
GREENS	14
OTHER	5
UNSPECIFIED	17

Episode 19 – 25 September

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	39
ALP	24
GREENS	19
OTHER	1
UNSPECIFIED	17



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Episode 20 – 2 October

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
COALITION	32
ALP	32
GREENS	18
OTHER	2
UNSPECIFIED	16

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 94**

**Topic: Annual report**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

If the ABC annual report has not yet been tabled, when will it be tabled and was any consideration given to having the annual report ready in advance of Supplementary Estimates as a courtesy?

**Answer:**

The ABC's annual report was tabled on 22 October 2008.

The ABC does not set the tabling date.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 95**

**Topic: Staff recruitments**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How many permanent staff recruited since the budget estimates?

What level are these staff?

**Answer:**

Since 1 May 2008, 72 permanent staff members have been recruited.

The levels of these staff are as attached:

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

<b>NEW HIRES (FROM 1/05/2008 - 5/11/08)</b>			
<b>On-going staff</b>			
Level	Headcount		Total
	Full Time	Part Time	
Senior Executive Band 1	2		2
Senior Executive Band 2	3		3
Senior Executive Band 3	2		2
Administrative/Professional Band 4	5		5
Administrative/Professional Band 5	3		3
Administrative/Professional Band 6	2		2
Administrative/Professional Band 7	4		4
Administrative/Professional Band 8	3		3
Administrative/Professional Band 9	2		2
Program Maker Band 3	5	2	7
Program Maker Band 4	4		4
Program Maker Band 5	5		5
Program Maker Band 6	8		8
Program Maker Band 7	4		4
Program Maker Band 8	2		2
Program Maker Band 9	2		2
Technologist Band 2	1		1
Technologist Band 3	1		1
Technologist Band 4	1		1
Technologist Band 5	2		2
Technologist Band 6	2		2
Technologist Band 7	3		3
Technologist Band 9	1		1
Shop Manager Gd C	1		1
Shop Assistant		2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>72</b>

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 96**

**Topic: Staff recruitments**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How many temporary positions exist or have been created since budget estimates?

**Response:**

As at 5 November 2008, there are 350 temporary positions.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 97**

**Topic: Staff recruitments**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

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

**Answer:**

Between 1 May 2008 and 5 November 2008, 255 employees have been employed on contract (engaged or converted from casual).

The average length of their employment period is 5.28 months.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 98**

**Topic: Staff recruitments**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?

If so, where and at what level?

**Answer:**

No. The ABC is not subject to the efficiency dividend.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 99**

**Topic: Razor Gang**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What discussions has the ABC had with the Razor Gang Mk II?

Has the Razor Gang indicated any cuts/savings to be made by the ABC?

**Answer:**

The ABC has not had any discussions with the Razor Gang Mk II and has had no indication of any cuts or savings to be made.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 100**

**Topic: Special accounts**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What special accounts does the ABC currently hold? How much is in these accounts?

Does the ABC use the interest from these funds to fund ongoing operations?

Has the Razor Gang Mark II given any indication about the future of these special accounts?

**Answer:**

The ABC does not hold any special accounts.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 101**

**Topic: Underspent programs**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How many programs were underspent in 07-08 financial year?

What requests have been made to roll-over underspends to 2008-09?

Were these requests successful?

**Answer:**

The ABC is funded using operation wide appropriations from the Australian Government. The ABC apportioned its appropriation against outputs and reports expenditure against these outputs, rather than specific programs.

There were no requests to roll over underspends to 2008-09. As an entity subject to the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act, the ABC drew down amounts appropriated in 2007-08 in full, for application to the Corporation's operations by the ABC Board and management. Any balances at year-end form part of the Corporation's overall resources.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 102**

**Topic: Media Monitoring**  
**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How much has been spent on media monitoring to date this year?

**Answer:**

From 1 July 2008 to 31 October 2008, the ABC has spent \$49,898.65 on media monitoring

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 103**

**Topic: Programs**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What communications programs has the ABC undertaken, or are planning to undertake?

For each program, what is the total spend?

Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.

**Answer:**

The ABC does not generally conduct communications programs, with the exception of promoting content and products to ABC audiences and broadcasting community service announcements (see answer to question on notice 108).

The ABC is presently running promotions to encourage its audience to contribute to the Government's review into public broadcasting and a general information campaign on how to receive digital TV. Such promotions are produced in-house at a negligible cost.

The Corporation is also broadcasting promotions about the Freeview digital offer in 2009. The Freeview announcement is supplied to the ABC by Freeview Australia Limited.

The Corporation placed public notices in metropolitan papers in November 2008, inviting the public to contribute to the Review of the ABC's Self Regulation Framework (see question on notice 105). The closing date for submissions is 23 December 2008. The total cost has been quoted as \$27,029.34.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 104**

**Topic: FOI requests**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Has the ABC received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?

How many FOI requests has the ABC received?

How many have been granted or denied?

How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests?

**Answer:**

The ABC has not received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests.

Since May 2008, the ABC has received four FOI requests.

Three have been refused, one has been granted in part.

There have been no conclusive certificates issued.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 105**

**Topic: Reviews**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How many Reviews are currently being undertaken in the ABC?

When will each of these reviews be concluded?

Which Reviews have been completed since Budget Estimates?

When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?

**Answer:**

The ABC regularly reviews its programming schedules and operational efficiency across the organisation. This is part of normal management and business practice, and is independent of the Government.

A review of public broadcasting in Australia is currently under way. The Government released a Discussion Paper *ABC and SBS: Towards a Digital Future* in mid-October, with public submissions closing on 12 December 2008.

At times, the ABC conducts reviews where the Corporation invites responses by experts or the general public. In July 2008, the Corporation published "Sources and Conflicts: Review of the adequacy of ABC Editorial Policies relating to source protection and to the reporting by journalists of events in which they are participants". The Review of the ABC Self Regulation Framework is currently being conducted and is expected to be completed by February 2009.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 106**

**Topic: Non-government revenue**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Has the ABC compared its sources of non-government revenue with those of other public broadcasters around the world?

Are reports that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) generates more than 15 per cent from commercial ventures, compared with just 2 per cent for the ABC, accurate?

If such disparity in revenue streams exists, in what areas do other public broadcasters – particularly the BBC – pursue commercial ventures beyond those of the BBC?

**Answer:**

The media reports referred to in the question were not accurate. They compared a gross commercial revenue figure for the BBC with a net commercial revenue (profit) figure for the ABC. Clearly this is not a valid comparison.

On a more like-for-like comparison the BBC returns 1% profit to revenue from its commercial operations (commercial profit divided by total revenue) and the ABC returns 1.6% profit to revenue (commercial profit divided by total revenue).

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 107**

**Topic: Program changes**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What changes to the process of programming changes, including to the associated communication strategy with staff and audience, will be made, following the concerns recently expressed at the decision to discontinue the Religion Report and other Radio National programs?

**Answer:**

The ABC will continue to improve its communication strategies that accompany changes to network schedules.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 108**

**Topic: Free-to-air Community Announcements**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Please provide details of what free to air time on both TV and radio that the ABC dedicates to 'community' announcements including, if possible, the frequency and nature of such announcements.

**Answer:**

There is no specific dedication of time to Community Service Announcements (CSAs) on ABC Radio or Television. CSAs are assessed and broadcast in accordance with Section 14 of the Editorial Policies.

The frequency and rotation of CSAs differs widely and depends on the nature of the CSA. Delivery may be as pre-recorded CSAs or live presenter reads, which are commonly used across Local Radio.

In September 2008, approximately 3500 pre-recorded CSAs were broadcast across the 60 Local Radio stations. These ranged from specific campaigns such as the Walk to Work, Depression Awareness, Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness and Anti-Drink Driving Campaigns, to weather and disaster alerts and information, bushfire awareness and preparedness and charity fundraisers eg for the MS society.

The frequency of CSAs on ABC TV also varies, depending on technical implications, classification and regional limitations, and the nature of the particular campaign. In October 2008, 13 different organisations had CSAs played on ABC TV on 56 different occasions. They ranged from CSAs submitted by the Heart Foundation, the International Red Cross, Rotary and Arthritis Australia to the Poppy Day Appeal.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 109**

**Topic: Grievance debate**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Reference is made to a Grievance Debate in the House of Representatives on 16 June 2008 by Mr Don Randall (p.134 Hansard). In the concluding paragraph, Mr Randall refers to an assurance by Mr Scott of a follow-up story. Please provide details of when the follow-up story was put to air by the ABC. If no follow-up story was put to air, please provide an explanation as to why this did not occur.

**Answer:**

The ABC has not broadcast a follow-up story. In the response to Mr Randall's original complaint, the Managing Director advised that *The 7.30 Report* intended to do a follow-up story once the final report of the investigation by the WA Mines Inspectors from the Western Australian Department of Consumer and Employment Protection became available.

An interim report noted that employees 'felt comfortable raising safety concerns' and 'did not feel intimidated', and that most workplaces inspected were of 'a high standard of safety'. But it also found that 'issues of disagreement' existed over safety controls and procedures between employees and management, and the existence of the petition indicated that improvements could be made.

The ABC's request for an interview with the inspectors was declined because of the interim nature of their report. In August 2007, the ABC requested an interview with a departmental representative or the Minister once the report was completed.

The report was never made public. The ABC has been advised that the report 'is not a public document and was sent to the Minister's Office. As such Resources Safety is not in a position to release the report or make comments on the report'.

No reply was received from the Minister's office to a request for the report's release.

BHP Billiton also declined a request to participate in a follow-up story.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 110**

**Topic: Religious Report**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

In relation to the decision by the ABC to cut the Religious Report, please provide an explanation as to the background for this occurring including:

- who made the decision to axe the program
- when was such a decision made
- was this matter considered by the ABC Board prior to the decision to axe the program

**Answer:**

The decision to make changes to the 2009 Radio National schedule was made by Radio National management in consultation with the Head of National Radio Networks and Director of Radio.

The decision was made in October after consultation with staff in Radio National.

The matter was not submitted to the ABC Board for consideration. Changes to the schedule mix are a management responsibility.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 111**

**Topic: Legal costs**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

What is the current budgeted amount for legal costs? Please provide details as to the basis and procedures undertaken in assessing the likely legal budget required.

**Answer:**

The budgeted amount for legal costs for 2008/09 is \$2.12 million. Prior to the commencement of the financial year, input from various divisions of the ABC is sought in relation to anticipated needs for legal services for the relevant year. In addition, the ABC considers historical legal costs and current and anticipated litigation levels.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 112**

**Topic: Legal costs**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

What contingent liabilities does the ABC have regarding legal matters?

**Answer:**

In the normal course of activities, claims for damages and other recoveries have been lodged against the ABC. The ABC has disclaimed liability and is actively defending these actions. It is not possible to estimate the amount of any eventual payments which may be required in relation to these claims.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 113**

**Topic: Merger with SBS**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

What work has been undertaken at the ABC, including by ABC management and the ABC Board, regarding any merger with SBS. Please provide details of the same including the date when such work was first commenced and the anticipated savings that such a merger could achieve. Please provide a copy of any such work.

**Answer:**

In August 2007 the ABC engaged the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to provide an objective estimate of the possible efficiency benefits from closer integration of the ABC and SBS. It was a follow up project to the major review of ABC television production conducted by BCG which recommended a range of efficiency improvements.

In April 2008 at the 2020 Summit, SBS proposed that the ABC and SBS create “a single platform to manage common elements of broadcasting technology and infrastructure, and other services where this makes sense”, in order to achieve economies of scale and savings that could be invested in additional Australian content. Discussions between the ABC and SBS since the summit have been limited to transmission and infrastructure.

In October 2008 the Government released a Discussion Paper on the future of public broadcasting *ABC and SBS: Towards a Digital Future*. The Discussion Paper invited comment on the possible efficiencies that might be gained from closer co-operation between ABC and SBS, including savings from a common platform delivering “back office” corporate functions such as legal services and information technology.

In light of the Discussion Paper, the ABC requested that BCG review the work conducted for the ABC in late 2007 and provide a final report and recommendations.

The summary findings of the BCG report and recommendations are attached.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 114**

**Topic: Q&A**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Further to comments in the Age of 21 October 2008 by Mr Scott “We have tried a number of different things to try and ensure that we have all the viewpoints represented in the audience and I think we have”. Please provide details about these “different things” including:

- Listing of all approaches made to different individuals and organisations;
- The dates of such approaches
- Any response to such approaches
- A listing of all acceptances
- A listing of all refusals, including any reasons for refusal

**Answer:**

See answer to question on notice 85.

Individuals and groups are regularly contacted by Q&A producers as part of the production process for the program. These individuals and groups are encouraged to attend, or register to attend, and to invite others to do the same. Lists of those contacted, and the dates of such contacts, are not routinely collected or compiled by the producers.

The organisations and groups contacted by the program producers, and the individuals representing these groups, spoke to the ABC with a reasonable expectation that their responses would remain confidential, and the ABC has not logged individual responses. In addition, contacts are in the form of encouragement and invitation to attend, and in many cases, there would be no immediate response.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 115**

**Topic: Funding from Radio National culling**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Is the funding from culling Radio National's excellent innovative programming being reallocated to online programme needs?

**Answer:**

There has been no 'cull' of Radio National's specialist or innovative programming. The changes to the line-up will enable reallocation of four positions to strengthen Radio National's online production.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 116**

**Topic: TV studios automation**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How will the automation of TV studios affect program-making?

**Answer:**

Studio automation means that programs can be made more efficiently

Studio automation will not affect the quality of program-making.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 117**

**Topic: In-house TV production**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How much in-house TV documentary production is undertaken at the ABC?

**Answer:**

Since 2004/05, the ABC has produced around 34 documentary television hours a year in-house.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 118**

**Topic: In-house TV production**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How much in-house TV drama production is undertaken at the ABC?

**Answer:**

The ABC does not produce any drama in-house.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 119**

**Topic: Triennial funding**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

What is the monetary value of ABC funding in the Triennial funding request?

**Answer:**

The ABC is currently discussing its triennial funding submission with the Government, and details of specific policy proposals are confidential.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question 120**

**Topic: Radio National axing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Can you describe how the decisions were made to axe the radio national programmes which were announced last week?

**Answer:**

The changes to the Radio National broadcast schedule in 2009 were made following consultation within the Radio National network and taking into account audience feedback and use of Radio National content on both radio and online.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question 121**

**Topic: Radio National axing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Clearly ABC Radio National wants to develop its online profile - but would you agree that you have cut many of the distinctive programs that draw the online audience [for podcasts and transcripts] in the first place?

**Answer:**

No. Download data indicates that the programs that have been cut in the change to the programming mix draw a relatively low online audience.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question 122**

**Topic: Radio National axing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

The ABC constantly refers to Radio National as the ‘jewel in the crown’ of public broadcasting. Has the ABC made the case to the Government for a substantial boost in funding so that specialty programming does not need to be cut in order to increase the online profile of the ABC?

**Answer:**

The ABC has submitted its Triennial Funding bid which includes funding for Radio National.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 123**

**Topic: Outsourcing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Can you provide us with an overview of how you are approaching the outsourcing of production at the ABC?

**Answer:**

The ABC commissions projects internally or in partnership with Screen Australia and independent filmmakers on the basis of the most cost-efficient and effective production. These arrangements allow the ABC to maximise the amount of content it can deliver to audiences from available funds. All production, internal and co-production, must be produced to the ABC's editorial and legal standards.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 124**

**Topic: Outsourcing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Which program genres are most affected by outsourcing policies?

**Answer:**

Decisions about outsourcing are made on the basis of efficient production and leverage of the ABC's investment. Certain TV genres, primarily documentaries and drama, are not able to be fully produced in-house. Most other genres are produced as both internal and independently commissioned slates.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 125**

**Topic: Outsourcing**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How will jobs cuts of 35 people impact on in-house ABC TV production given the level of experience and skills of the people leaving? Will the same level of output and the same innovation be expected with 35 less staff?

**Answer:**

There will be no adverse impact on internal production. Following a review, the ABC has improved its production processes and expects to maintain the same level of output and quality of programming.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 126**

**Topic: Advertising**  
**Senator Ludlam asked:**

The ABC's non-commercial nature is an important component of the respect it has earned as a truly independent voice. There has been speculation about the ABC considering advertising. Can you outline the state of this policy within the ABC?

**Answer:**

Under Section 31 of the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*, the Corporation is not permitted to broadcast advertisements on its domestic radio and television services. The ABC has no plans to allow advertising on abc.net.au sites.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 127**

**Topic: Website advertising**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How many contracts have been signed with host websites where advertising will be wrapped around ABC content?

**Answer:**

ABC Commercial has a total of 24 contracts with host websites where advertising is adjacent to ABC content.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 128**

**Topic: Website advertising**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

What advertising revenues will be gained from these contracts?

**Answer:**

Of the revenue derived from these 24 contracts, 5% is from a share of advertising revenue.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 129**

**Topic: Advertising revenue**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How important is advertising revenue to the ABC now, in the context of the Corporation's overall budget?

**Answer:**

The ABC does not broadcast advertisements on its domestic radio and television services or carry advertising on abc.net.au. Advertising revenue from Australia Network and ABC Commercial comprises less than 0.1% of total ABC income in 2007-08.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 130**

**Topic: Religion Programming**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

I refer to the recent decision to cut nine specialty programmes from the Radio National schedule. ABC's Managing Director Mr Scott has announced that there will be more religion than ever on the ABC next year including on ABC-TV in prime time. Can you define what this means, and whether these religion programs will be made by the 60-year-old specialist religion department?

**Answer:**

Religion remains a cornerstone of ABC Radio National's output which will continue to feature 2.5 hours of religious content on radio weekly, complemented by other religious output on ABC Radio. While *The Religion Report* has been discontinued, a number of other programs will continue to be produced by the ABC's religious radio unit including *The Spirit of Things*, the award-winning *Encounter* program and *The Rhythm Divine*, all broadcast on Radio National; *For the God Who Sings* on ABC Classic FM and John Cleary's *Sunday Night* program on ABC Local Radio. These are all produced by the ABC's religious unit.

Religion programming also features on ABC TV, including *Songs of Praise* and *Compass*, the only prime time television program dedicated to religion and spirituality screened by any Australian TV network.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 131**

**Topic: Specialist Programming cuts**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Can you outline where the directive to cut the specialist programs came from?

**Answer:**

The decision to make changes to the Radio National schedule in 2009 was made by Radio National management in consultation with network staff.



**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 132**

**Topic: Specialist Programming cuts**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Was the Managing Director consulted before this decision was taken?

**Answer:**

Yes.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 133**

**Topic: Specialist Programming cuts**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Was the ABC Board consulted before this decision was taken?

**Answer:**

No. Programming decisions are a management responsibility.

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 134**

**Topic: Specialist Programming cuts**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

How would you describe the response from the public to news that TRR has been axed?

Have you been moved to reconsider the decision to axe TRR?

**Answer:**

The response has been mixed. The major concern has been a perceived reduction in specialist content on Radio National, which is not the case.

No.