



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Budget

SPEECH

Monday, 24 November 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Monday, 24 November 2014
Page 12801
Questioner
Speaker Fitzgibbon, Joel, MP

Source House
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Responder
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Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (13:30): What a dark day it is for public broadcasting in this country. We are now starting to see the real effects of the Prime Minister's broken promise on ABC and SBS funding. Today, one-third of the team at ABC 1233 Newcastle lost their jobs and much of the station's programing went with them. I am not yet sure what will be the impact on ABC Upper Hunter in my electorate.

This will tear at the heart of the Hunter's social and economic fabric. Our ABC is not just a broadcasting service; it is an institution, delivering balanced news, community information and stimulating public debate. The ABC can always be relied upon to promote and defend the Hunter's interest and, in times of crisis, including natural disaster, it plays the role of emergency broadcaster. This is true in every region in the country. Rural and regional towns everywhere rely on the ABC for their local news, for special rural programing and for programs like *Bush Telegraph*, which, I understand, has been axed. This is a disgrace and every Australian who heard Tony Abbott make his promise not to touch the ABC and SBS is entitled to be very angry.

This morning on ABC Newcastle we had the member for Paterson blaming Mark Scott for the demise of ABC services in rural and regional Australia. This is a disgrace. And all those representing rural and regional seats on that side have abandoned their local communities.