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**From:** Kowald, Sophie <S 47F >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 August 2023 10:10 AM  
**To:** Mark Tapley  
**Subject:** RE: Woodside comments [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

OFFICIAL

Thanks Mark

OFFICIAL

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**From:** Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 August 2023 10:05 AM  
**To:** Kowald, Sophie <S 47F >  
**Subject:** Woodside comments

Hi Sophie,  
We received questions from the West Australian, Nine News Perth, Seven News Perth and The Australian.

ABC responses to various questions:

An ABC TV crew was there to film the protest as part of an upcoming report. The ABC has nothing to do with the protest beyond the reporting it is doing.

The ABC TV crew was there to film the protest for an upcoming report. They had no knowledge what behaviour would occur. The ABC has nothing to do with the protest beyond the reporting it is doing.

A TV crew filmed the protest for a story. Any notion that the TV crew was colluding with the protestors is false.

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**From:** Kowald, Sophie <§ 47F >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 August 2023 3:09 PM  
**To:** Mark Tapley  
**Subject:** RE: Roger Cook comments - ABC presence at Woodside protest [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Thanks Mark

Noted.

Regards  
Sophie

OFFICIAL

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**From:** Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 August 2023 2:39 PM  
**To:** Kowald, Sophie <§ 47F >  
**Subject:** FW: Roger Cook comments - ABC presence at Woodside protest

Hi Sophie,  
FYI  
Our response to the comments from Premier Cook.

Regards  
Mark

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**From:** Sally Jackson <[Jackson.Sally@abc.net.au](mailto:Jackson.Sally@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 2, 2023 14:14  
**To:** § 22 <§ 22 >  
**Cc:** Nick Leys <[Leys.Nick@abc.net.au](mailto:Leys.Nick@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Roger Cook comments - ABC presence at Woodside protest

Hi § 22, we have updated the statement. This is attributable to an ABC spokesperson:

A Four Corners team attended the protest action to gather material for a potential report later this year.

Just prior to the action the team received a tip to go to an address, they had no knowledge what was at the address or that it was someone's house.

They had no knowledge of what action was going to occur there.

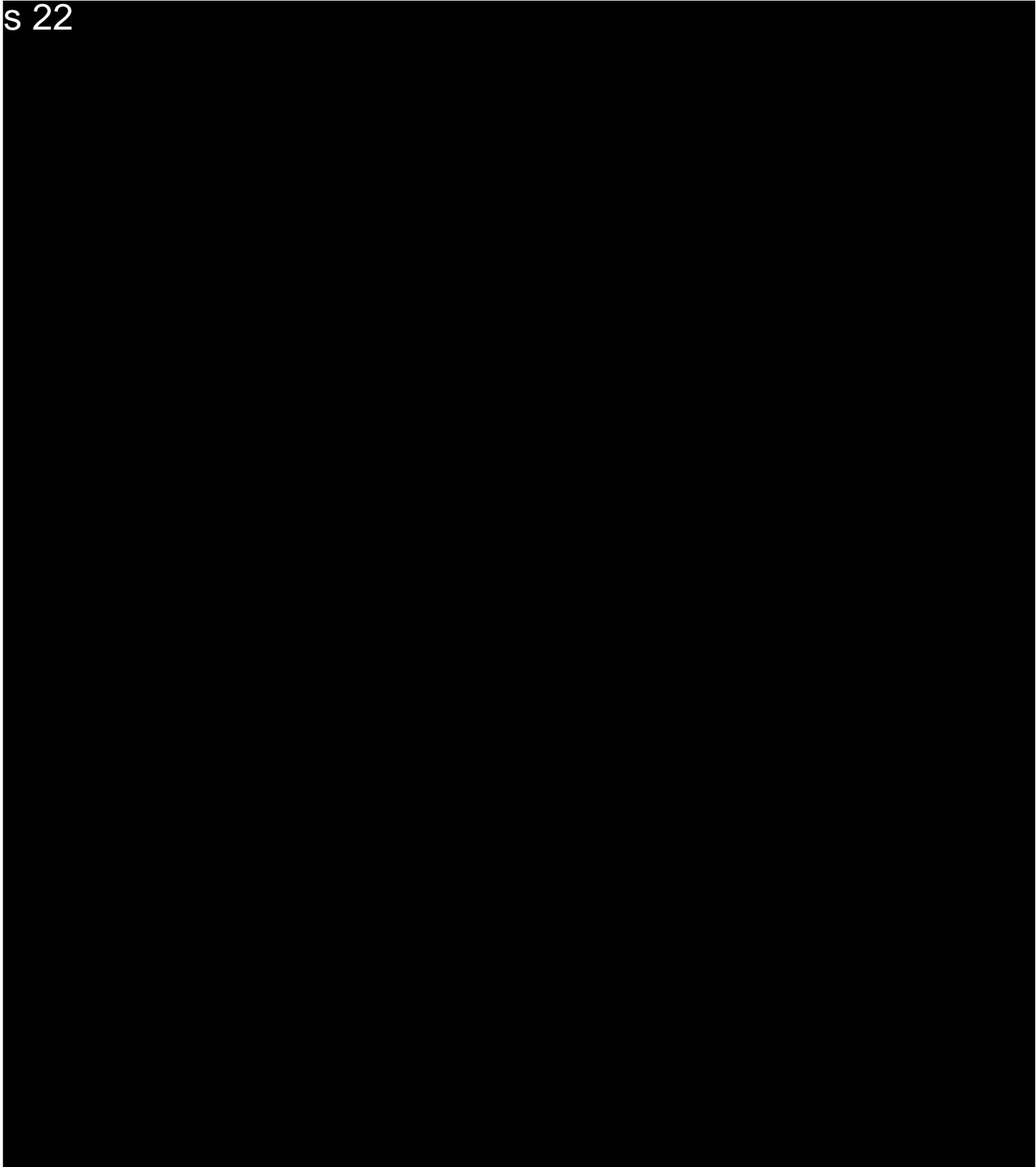
When they arrived the police were already in attendance, in numbers.

The ABC team remained on public land observing what was happening and getting some vision, as journalists do.

They at no time went on to private property or had any involvement in what was happening.

The ABC team in no way colluded with the activists.

s 22



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**From:** Mark Tapley  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 August 2023 11:11 AM  
**To:** Sally Jackson  
**Subject:** Re: Questions regarding Woodside protest

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Understood. Thanks Sally

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**From:** Sally Jackson <Jackson.Sally@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 11:08:48 AM  
**To:** Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Questions regarding Woodside protest

Ok I'll use that. To clarify, we were discussing a media response not a published statement, although effectively they are the same.

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**From:** Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 11:02 AM  
**To:** Sally Jackson <Jackson.Sally@abc.net.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Questions regarding Woodside protest

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**From:** David N Anderson - Managing Director's 11C  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 11:00 am  
**To:** Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>; Justin Stevens <Stevens.Justin@abc.net.au>  
**Cc:** Nick Leys <Leys.Nick@abc.net.au>; Managing Director's Office's 11C  
**Subject:** Re: Questions regarding Woodside protest

Dear Mark and Justin,

Just to be perfectly clear, there are to be no more official ABC Statements issued on this matter, without my approval.

Additionally, when it comes to media queries on this matter, I think we respond broadly, along the lines of;

“As the ABC has previously stated, in response to concerns raised the ABC is conducting a detailed examination into this matter, noting that it is a for a story that has yet to be made available to the public.”

In the meantime, let's find out what we can by Monday afternoon as planned and take it from there.

Regards,

David

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**From:** Nick Leys  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 August 2023 12:18 PM  
**To:** David N Anderson - Managing Director; Mark Tapley; Justin Stevens  
**Subject:** RE: Questions regarding Woodside protest

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Here's what I sent.

As previously stated, the ABC is conducting a detailed examination into this matter, noting it is a for a story that is yet to be broadcast and made available to the public.

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**From:** David N Anderson - Managing Director s 11C  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 12:11 PM  
**To:** Nick Leys <Leys.Nick@abc.net.au>; Mark Tapley <Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au>; Justin Stevens <Stevens.Justin@abc.net.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Questions regarding Woodside protest

Ok by me

D

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**From:** Nick Leys <[Leys.Nick@abc.net.au](mailto:Leys.Nick@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 11:26:33 AM  
**To:** David N Anderson - Managing Director s 11C; Mark Tapley <[Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au](mailto:Tapley.Mark@abc.net.au)>; Justin Stevens <[Stevens.Justin@abc.net.au](mailto:Stevens.Justin@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions regarding Woodside protest

Slight tweak.

As previously stated, the ABC is conducting a detailed examination into this matter, noting that it is a for a story that has yet to be made available to the public.

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s 22

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**From:** s 11C  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 August 2023 2:37 PM  
**To:** Mark Tapley  
**Subject:** Final Statement

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Hi MT

See below.

Cheers  
MR

**Title: ABC Statement from the Managing Director**

Concerns have been raised regarding a potential story on climate protests that the ABC's Four Corners program is currently in the process of developing.

After issuing a brief statement on 2 August in response to numerous media inquiries, the ABC also commenced an examination of the circumstances surrounding its filming of the attempted protest outside the residence of Woodside CEO Meg O'Neill, including the lead up to and recording of events that transpired. As the story has not been published, the examination does not fall within the remit of the ABC Ombudsman.

The examination has been conducted as quickly as possible to establish what occurred and address concerns raised. The ABC does not generally comment on stories that are in the early stages of development, as is common across all organisations conducting investigative journalism. However, the ABC respects that it is important in this instance to provide further context on the story as well as information from its examination into the matter.

The Four Corners story, still early in development and subject to change, seeks to focus on climate protests in Australia and the response by government, police and business. The intended topic of the story at this stage is to examine changes to, and tightening of, anti-protest laws around the country and how they are being enforced. The program also seeks to critically examine the tactics by protest groups.

Based on the information reviewed, the proposed action by the protesters was in the planning prior to any contact with the ABC Four Corners team. The ABC's team understood that it would be a non-violent protest action, and they maintain that they did not have prior knowledge of the address for the protest until the relevant morning.

It is understood the protesters intended to record themselves during the planned protest and then distribute their own footage to media after the protest. The ABC team maintain they did not collude with or encourage the protesters. The planned protest did not eventuate because the protesters were arrested by police who were already at the location on arrival.

The information provided does not indicate the Four Corners team crossed onto private property. The team also followed the direction of police, moving further back onto the road and later across the road. The team's interactions with the protesters were at all times as journalistic observers, not participants.

The review does indicate the team did have some awareness of what was planned. To that extent, the element of the previous statement issued by the ABC concerning knowledge of what specific actions might occur prior to the event did not reflect all relevant information subsequently available and was incorrect. We will be investigating how this inaccuracy arose further to ensure this does not happen again.

The ABC's approach to filming protests, or any activity by others which could involve misconduct by a third party, is guided by newsworthiness and journalistic principles. Immersive style documentary programs have been a part of public interest journalism programs on the ABC and on other broadcasters, for decades. Filming protests in that manner does not equate to endorsement of the activities.

In this particular instance, any airing of ABC footage on an ABC platform would not occur until a much later date, if at all, and only after it had been through significant prepublication editorial processes. That would include dealing with concerns over whether material identifies private addresses, noting that ABC News was not the publisher of recent images of Ms O'Neill's property available in other media.

The ABC has robust editorial policies, consistent with best practice, that already seek to strike a balance between protecting public interest journalism, privacy of individuals, and appropriately addressing controversial, sensitive, and legal matters. A strict rule of no reporting or recording of controversial matters would inevitably have prevented many important stories, from the ABC and other media organisations, from being published.

As a result of recent events, the ABC will be reviewing and if necessary, updating its editorial guidance about when mandatory upward referral is needed to appropriate senior management.

The ABC Four Corners team will continue to develop this story in the public interest. It will continue to be produced and completed as per the ABC's rigorous processes, complying with ABC Editorial Policies and the highest standards of editorial judgement before any publication.

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**From:** Nick Leys  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 August 2023 3:42 PM  
**To:** Thomas Marnell  
**Cc:** Sally Jackson  
**Subject:** MD Statement  
**Attachments:** MD Statement.docx

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Thanks Tom. 4pm to publish please.

And we need to link from the bottom of the other statement:

**Updated on 11 August.** The ABC has published the results of the examination into this matter (LINK).

## Statement from the ABC Managing Director David Anderson

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For further information:

Nick Leys  
leys.nick@abc.net.au