

Responses from ABC spokesperson:

1. Why did ABC News stay with a replay of “Planet America” for almost 25 minutes, before returning to news coverage and events at Westfield Bondi?

Just before 4.15pm News Channel alerted the audience to a potential breaking news incident at Bondi Junction and that we would keep them up-to-date as news came to hand. We continued regular programming while we went to the scene.

The first digital story was published on the ABC News website at 4.15pm and a live blog began just after 5pm.

At 4.36pm NSW Police Media released its first statement, confirming a male had been shot and multiple people stabbed. At 4.38pm the News Channel broke into Planet America and coverage was continuous until 9.30pm. The first police press conference began at around 6.15pm.

The ABC took an urgent but measured approach to coverage of this unfolding and tragic situation.

2. Lia Harris was the sole reporter at Westfield Bondi for ABC News’ rolling coverage for the first few crucial hours and she was required to file for the 7pm bulletin as well. Why **didn’t** the ABC have a second reporter at Westfield Bondi on the story straight away? Were you caught short staffed?

The ABC had regular weekend staffing in the Sydney newsroom when word of the Bondi Junction attack first started coming through, around 3.50pm. Newsroom staffing was more than doubled within an hour, with additional reporters, producers (TV and digital) and editors working on the story. Staff from other ABC News teams also joined the coverage.

The first digital story was published on the ABC News website at 4.15pm and a live blog began just after 5pm. Specialist verification producers were working to examine UGC of the scene from social media and other sources.

Lia Harris is the ABC’s Sydney crime reporter and was the main reporter on air as the situation unfolded. Lia and camera operator Marcus Stimson left the newsroom for Bondi Junction around 4pm. Lia was supported by a producer in the newsroom for the 7PM.

The second reporter and crew moved between Bondi Junction and Waverley Police station for the police press conferences.

The third reporter and crew were based outside St Vincent’s hospital and spoke to family members who had gone to the hospital to check on loved ones.

An ABC photographer and another journalist were also at Bondi Junction taking photos and talking to witnesses.

- 3. Who else did the ABC send to that location in the first few hours, and in what roles? What time did the ABC news staff arrive at the scene?**

Answered above.

- 4. How many camera crews did you have at Westfield Bondi in the first few hours following the stabbing attack?**

Answered above.

- 5. Is the ABC satisfied with the performance of its dedicated 24-hour news channel on such a big story?**

The team sustained comprehensive rolling coverage for around five hours and provided the video and livestream coverage for the website and app, ABC iview, YouTube and Facebook. It did exactly what it's there to do.

- 6. Why did the Bondi stabbing story not lead the ABC 7pm bulletins in Brisbane and Canberra?**

The 7pm news package about Bondi Junction was being edited right up until deadline and unfortunately did not reach the Brisbane and Canberra bulletins in time for the lead story – which it should have been.

- 7. Is ABC News' coverage of this event now the subject of an ABC review?**

ABC News regularly reviews coverage of major news events so that lessons are learned and applied to future coverage.

- 8. If so, who is doing it and what are the terms of reference? Will it be published?**

(No response.)