

Corporate Affairs

ABC Ultimo Centre 700 Harris Street Ultimo NSW 2007 GPO Box 9994 Sydney NSW 2001 Tel. +61 2 8333 5261 abc.net.au

By email:	

Dear

FOI REQUEST - REFERENCE NUMBER 2013-29

I refer to your request for access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) in your email of 15 April 2013. Specifically, you have sought access to the following documents:

"Any document that relates to:

- How decisions are made as to what questions will be asked on the ABC program Q&A;
- How decisions are to be made about which tweets will be posted by the ABC through Q&A."

I am authorised by the Managing Director under section 23 of the FOI Act to make decisions in respect of requests made under that Act. Following is my decision in relation to your request.

I am satisfied that any documents which would fall within the scope of your request would be classified as 'program material'. The ABC is specifically excluded from the operation of the FOI Act in relation to its program material by virtue of s7(2) and Part II, Schedule 2 of the FOI Act. 'Program material' for the purposes of that Part has been interpreted to mean:

"the program and all versions of the whole or any part of the program, any transmission broadcast or publication of the program, and includes a document of any content or form embodied in the program and any document acquired or created for the purpose of creating the program, whether or not incorporated into the completed program...[and including] a document created after a program is broadcast [such as] transcripts of programs ... and documents produced by the ABC or incorporated in its records directly concerning the substantive content of the broadcast program"

The *Q&A* program is broadcast live on ABC1, is simulcast on ABC News24. Audience interaction is a key element of the program, with questions from the audience being posed to panel members. Questions are submitted in a range of ways, including directly from the studio audience, by email and by uploading web questions or video questions through the *Q&A* website. The twitter feed provides a further interactive dimension to the *Q&A* program. Each of these elements form part of the overall program. Accordingly, documents created for the purpose of creating those elements (such as the documents you have described) fall within the definition of 'program material' and the ABC is exempt

from the operation of the FOI Act in relation to them. In those circumstances, a decision regarding access is not required.

I note that there is publicly available information which may satisfy your request in relation to the use of twitter in the *Q&A* program. The *Q&A* website includes the following information:

- Information about Q&A's moderated twitter feed: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/ganda/txt/s3222272.htm
- Q&A Message Board House Rules: (http://www2b.abc.net.au/tmb/Client/Message.aspx?b=114&m=124815&ps=50&dm=2)

If you are dissatisfied with this decision you can apply for Internal or Information Commissioner (IC) Review. You do not have to apply for Internal Review before seeking IC Review. Information about your review rights is attached.

Yours sincerely

Judith Maude

Head, Corporate Governance Direct line 02 8333 5316