

Question on notice no. 9

Portfolio question number: 9

2019-20 Supplementary budget estimates

Environment and Communications Committee, Communications and the Arts Portfolio

Senator Anne Urquhart: asked the Department of Communications and the Arts on 22 October 2019—

Senator URQUHART: In April we established that 167 mobile base stations promised by the Mobile Black Spot program had yet to be switched on. Can you tell me how many towers from round 1 are still not operational? **Mr Paterson:** Yes, Senator. These numbers are from a couple of weeks ago. Based on the numbers I have at the moment, out of the 499 round 1 base stations, there are 28 that are still to be constructed.

Senator URQUHART: Still to be constructed. So how many from round 2 are still not operational? **Mr Paterson:** We funded 266 under round 2. There are 232 that have been constructed, which means we have 34 base stations still to be constructed under round 2.

Senator URQUHART: And how many from round 3? **Mr Paterson:** You are testing my maths, Senator, but okay. For round 3 there are 102 base stations and 43 are on air, which means we've got 59 still to be constructed.

Senator URQUHART: Okay. And do you have time frames for the 28, 34 and 59—when they will be operational? **Mr Paterson:** I would prefer to take that on notice because, as I said, it's on a base station by base station basis. **Senator URQUHART:** That's fine—if you could take that on notice. Just finally on the black spots—and I'm happy for you to take this on notice—on 30 September the minister, Minister Fletcher, along with Minister Coulton and Tasmanian Mr Gavin Pearce, put out a media release about Tasmania's west coast. Can you give me some timelines for that project in terms of the increased coverage or the improved coverage? **Mr Paterson:** As you would be aware, Senator, that project involves backhaul upgrades and then the backhaul upgrades then enable a new base station to be delivered at Tullah and 4GX upgrades to occur at Savage River, Strachan, Zeehan and Waratah—excuse my pronunciation.

Senator URQUHART: That is exactly perfect. **Mr Paterson:** Thank you. So obviously you need to do the backhaul component first. I am just checking my timing. I've got 12 months from now—that is the time frame I've been given for all of that. I do know we're in discussions with Telstra at the moment about whether the Tullah base station can be done earlier than that, but I don't have a conclusion on that. **Senator URQUHART:** Can you take that on notice and provide a bit more detail? **Mr Paterson:** I'm happy to, Senator.

Answer —

Please see attached.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2019
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 9

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 64, 22/10/2019

Topic: Mobile Black Spot program - timelines

Senator Anne Urquhart asked:

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Senator URQUHART: Can you take that on notice and provide a bit more detail?

Mr Paterson: I'm happy to, Senator.

Answer:

As at 30 September 2019, 121 of the 867 mobile base stations funded under the first three rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program (the Program) were not yet operational (round one – 28; round two – 34; Priority Locations Round – 59) and are listed by round in the tables below.

Note that as at 6 November 2019, an additional five rounds one to three sites are now on air. These sites are identified as 'Complete' in the tables below.

Round One: 28 base station sites

Name	Carrier	State	Scheduled completion
Apslawn	Vodafone	TAS	Q2, 2020
Bindoon West	Telstra	WA	Q1, 2020
Brandum	Vodafone	TAS	Q2, 2020
Brooms Head	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Coalcliff	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Finke	Telstra	NT	Q2, 2020
Glen Valley	Vodafone	VIC	Q2, 2020
Goldie	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Goshen	Vodafone	TAS	Q4, 2019
Graytown	Telstra	VIC	Q4, 2019
Imanpa	Telstra	NT	Q2, 2020
Jurien East	Telstra	WA	Q4, 2019
Kanmantoo	Telstra	SA	Q1, 2020
Kingsford	Telstra	WA	Q1, 2020
Lake Corella	Vodafone	QLD	Q2, 2020
Lake Magenta	Telstra	WA	Q4, 2019
Leeuwin	Telstra	WA	Q4, 2019
Manna Mountain	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Miena	Vodafone	TAS	Q2, 2020
Minnie Water	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Mount Carrington	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Pilliga Forrest (Newell Hwy)	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Sandy Hills	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Ungarie	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Urandangi	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Wayatinah	Vodafone	TAS	Q4, 2019
William Bay	Telstra	WA	Q1, 2020
Yelvertoft	Vodafone	QLD	Q2, 2020

Round Two: 34 base station sites

Name	Carrier	State	Scheduled completion
Alexander Bay (campground)	Optus	WA	Q2, 2020
Baranduda Range	Optus	VIC	Q4, 2019
Bark Hut Inn	Optus	NT	Q1, 2020
Bena	Optus	VIC	Q4, 2019
Boreen Point	Optus	QLD	Q1, 2020
Buckland North	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020
Bunundarra	Optus	QLD	Q1, 2020
Cape Tribulation	Optus	QLD	Q2, 2020
Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Centre	Optus	QLD	Q4, 2019
Cootharaba Road	Optus	QLD	Q2, 2020
Doughboy Mountain	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Dunoon	Optus	NSW	Q1, 2020
Gembrook North	Optus	VIC	Q2, 2020
Great Ocean Road	Telstra	VIC	Q4, 2019
Honeymoon Bay	Optus	WA	Q2, 2020
Injinoo	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Kholo	Telstra	QLD	Q1, 2020
Lake Barrine	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019
Lexton	Optus	VIC	Q1, 2020
Lingara	Optus	NT	Q1, 2020
Litchfield Ranger Station	Optus	NT	Q1, 2020
Lorne South	Optus	VIC	Q2, 2020
Mount Burrell	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Mount Hourigan	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Mulan Community	Optus	WA	Q2, 2020
Nullawil	Optus	VIC	Complete
Redesdale	Optus	VIC	Complete
Spencer	Optus	NSW	Interim Solution in place Q2, 2020
St Albans	Optus	NSW	Q2, 2020
The Yellow Mountain	Vodafone	NSW	Q2, 2020
Waldaira	Optus	NSW	Q4, 2019
Wandiligong	Optus	VIC	Q1, 2020
Winninowie	Optus	SA	Q2, 2020
Wyndham	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020

Priority Locations Round (Round Three): 59 base station sites

Name	Carrier	State	Scheduled completion
Alva Beach	Optus	QLD	Q1, 2020
Beaconsfield Upper	Telstra	VIC	Q1, 2020
Beechford/Lefroy	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020
Beerwah	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Bellbrae (Bells Beach)	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Belmont	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Bickley	Telstra	WA	Q2, 2020
Birregurra	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Blackstone Heights	Telstra	TAS	Q1, 2020
Bombala	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Brooklyn/Dangar Island	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Burbank	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Carwoola	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Cashmere	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Cedar Creek	Optus	QLD	Q2, 2020
Cedar Creek	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Chidlow	Telstra	WA	Q1, 2020
Chum Creek	Telstra	VIC	Complete
Clyde Mountain	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Copeton Dam	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Crosslands Reserve	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Daintree/Cape Tribulation	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Dayboro	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019
Delegate	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Devonport	Telstra	TAS	Q1, 2020
Donnybrook	Optus	QLD	Q1, 2020
Fig Tree Hill	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Fullerton Cove	Optus	NSW	Q2, 2020
Glass House Mountains	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Highvale	Telstra	QLD	Q1, 2020
Kalorama	Vodafone	VIC	Q2, 2020
Kangaroo Valley	Telstra	NSW	Q2, 2020
Karana Downs	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019
Killcare	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Lachlan	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020
Megalong Valley	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Moreton Island (Bulwer)	Optus	QLD	Q4, 2019
Mount Crosby	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019

Mount Evelyn	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Mount Seaview	Optus	NSW	Q2, 2020
Murdunna	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020
Nammoonna	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
North Stradbroke Island	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Palm Island	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Parkerville	Telstra	WA	Complete
Red Hill	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Russell Island 2	Optus	QLD	Q1, 2020
Serpentine/Keysbrook	Telstra	WA	Q4, 2019
Shoreham	Telstra	VIC	Q2, 2020
Toolakea	Telstra	QLD	Q2, 2020
Tumut	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Undullah/Flagstone	Telstra	QLD	Q1, 2020
Upper Ulam Road	Telstra	QLD	Q1, 2020
Weipa	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019
Wide Bay Highway	Telstra	QLD	Q4, 2019
Wilmot	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020
Wonga Beach	Telstra	QLD	Complete
Yellow Rock	Telstra	NSW	Q1, 2020
Yolla	Optus	TAS	Q2, 2020

The rollout schedules are regularly updated on the carriers' website as the rollout progresses:

Optus: <https://www.optus.com.au/shop/mobile/network/mobile-black-spot-program>

Telstra: <https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/mobile-black-spot-program>

Vodafone: <https://www.vodafone.com.au/red-wire/vodafone-mobile-black-spot-investment>

The rollout sequence for base stations funded under each round of the Program is determined by the carriers based on various factors, including obtaining local government planning approval, landowner agreement where necessary, and access to existing infrastructure, power and backhaul, and are therefore subject to change.

The project to improve mobile coverage and network capacity on the west coast of Tasmania is contracted to be completed by mid-2021, with the majority of work to be completed over the next 12 months.

Telstra is attempting to accelerate work on the new Tullah base station to activate it as soon as possible. However, a revised date for this base station cannot be provided at this time. Its construction is still dependent on external factors that Telstra does not fully control. For example, site acquisition processes, planning approvals and the provision of supporting services to the site such as power by third parties.

Telstra has already made progress on accelerating other parts of the project. Telstra has finalised an agreement for the backbone capacity upgrade between Burnie and Queenstown to allow the upgrades at Savage River, Zeehan and Waratah. Telstra has also commenced preliminary work to upgrade the backhaul radio transmission links for these sites and to improve the redundancy of its West Coast network.