

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Spill-over hearing March 2017
Communications Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 285

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Hansard Ref: Written, 31/03/2017

Topic: Radio coverage

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

1. Please advise how many people/homes are unable to receive terrestrial radio coverage in Western Australia?
2. Please advise how many people/homes are unable to receive terrestrial radio coverage in Queensland?
3. Please advise how many people/homes are unable to receive terrestrial radio coverage in the Northern?

Answer:

1, 2 and 3.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) cannot provide a quick or simple answer to these questions as it does not hold aggregated terrestrial radio coverage data.

If provided with sufficient time, the ACMA could provide an estimate of the population unable to receive terrestrial radio coverage in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory based on a set of reasonable assumptions about which radio services are in scope and what would represent acceptable reception quality. For example, it would be possible to estimate the resident population living outside the planned rural contour of ABC local radio services, as licensed. This would assume, firstly, that the rural signal contour boundary of an AM or FM radio service represents the edge of signal coverage at acceptable quality, and, secondly that ABC's local radio service has the most widespread coverage of all radio services.

The above methodology could, however, fail to take account of a potentially significant number of FM radio re-transmissions in very remote settlements, including remote indigenous communities, about which the ACMA has imperfect information. Some of these services may be licensed but not on air, while others may be on air but not licensed.

If the above assumptions provide an acceptable basis to proceed, the ACMA could develop estimates manually based on the ABC's published coverage checker, historic coverage maps and 2011 Census data held by the ACMA. Alternatively, the ABC itself may be in a better position to provide such estimates, and may have other information not available to the ACMA.