

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings May 2014
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications

Question No: 591

Program No. 1.3

Hansard Ref: Pages 16 (28/5/2014)

Topic: Media Reform

Senator Thorp asked:

Senator Thorp: So you are looking at three quite important areas there—anti-siphoning, retransmission and media ownership rules. They all have differential value affects. Should they be being looked at as a package of reforms?

Ms O'Loughlin: As I mentioned earlier, I think that that is really a matter for the minister.

Senator Thorp: Perhaps Senator Fifield could answer that one.

Senator Fifield: No, I will take it on notice for the minister.

Senator Thorp: It is a pretty basic question. Given the three important areas being looked at for reform, and the fact that they are going to have consequences each for the other, I just want to get a position on whether or not those reforms will be looked at as a package.

Senator Fifield: I will take that on notice for the minister.

Answer:

The Communications Portfolio Deregulation Roadmap indicates that in 2014 the Government will consider the potential for reform in a number of policy areas, in addition to the items forming part of the deregulation work program. Among others, the anti-siphoning scheme, media ownership rules and the retransmission of commercial and national broadcasting services have been identified in this category.

As part of the consideration of these issues, the Department of Communications has released a policy background paper on media control and ownership to inform and contribute to discussion about the current regulatory arrangements. The Government intends to consult widely with stakeholders before developing any specific proposals.