

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 21

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 63-64, 24/05/2017

Topic: Base Stations

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: How many base stations have taken more than one year to build and how many have taken more than two years to build? Can you give me the details for each round? Mr Paterson, I can see you looking to the sky. I am actually happy for you to take that on notice.

Mr Paterson: Thank you very much.

Senator Fifield: Just to clarify, do you mean from when planning or construction actually commenced or from when a site was announced?

Senator URQUHART: That have taken more than one year to be built. So being built I assume is when they start.

Senator Fifield: Thank you.

Senator URQUHART: If you want to give me further information I would be happy for that. If you could break it up, Mr Paterson, from when they commenced to when they were announced. So if you give me the two dates.

Mr Paterson: I can do that. I would just note that the round 1 locations were announced and then we went to a period of actually negotiating the contracts under round 1. There was a period of several months where those contracts were settled. I will provide you with that information.

Senator URQUHART: If you can break that down and take it on notice that would be fine.

Mr Paterson: I am happy to do that.

Answer:

The table below provides a summary of completed round 1 base stations from announcement date, the date of execution of the relevant funding deed, and the construction start date:

| Time to complete a base station (160 completed as at June 2017) | From announcement date | From funding deed execution date | From construction date |
|--|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Less than one year | 44 | 80 | 160 |
| Between one to two years | 116 | 80 | 0 |
| Over two years | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The outcomes of round 2 of the program were announced in December 2016. Three round 2 base stations are operational.

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The time from commencement of detailed planning to a mobile base station site becoming operational can take between 12-18 months based on various factors, including obtaining local government planning approval, landowner agreement where necessary, and access to existing infrastructure, power and backhaul.

The mobile network operators also need to stagger delivery of the 765 mobile base stations being funded under the Mobile Black Spot Program during the period of the program due to their logistical constraints.