

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Spill-over June 2017

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 279

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Pages 6-7, 15/06/2017

Topic: Electorate Briefs: 1 March 2016–2 July 2016

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: I am talking about the period between March and July 2016, and then 2 July to 30 November. Can I again ask you: are you not able to provide that information?

Mr Robinson: We do not believe that we can easily provide that information.

Senator URQUHART: I did not ask if you could easily provide it, or do it with difficulty.

Mr Robinson: I would be willing to go back again, and perhaps provide you with an expanded answer as to the range of types of points where that information might be available, if it is that last July period. I certainly would be open to taking it on notice, essentially, and going back and trying to provide more information about what the issue is for that period, and whether we can provide more information.

Senator DUNIAM: Just on that: there was mention before of a number of different databases. How long would it take you to provide the information? Is it a significant task?

Mr Robinson: For that period, the information is potentially in normal ministerial briefs in separately provided information; it is potentially in meeting briefs and speeches et cetera. They may have been provided by email, often probably, and they are probably registered on various parts of our correspondence systems et cetera. But it is just such a wide range. We are happy with going back and trying to provide more information to explain what that range is.

Senator DUNIAM: I am just interested in whether this is a laborious task, as in it will take up a significant amount of resources to track down all of this information across all of these systems and different formats et cetera.

Mr Robinson: Yes, it will take some time.

Senator DUNIAM: As long as we understand that when we are asking these things.

Senator URQUHART: Mr Robinson, I am happy for you to do that, but I just think it is unsatisfactory. What I would like to do is to seek a private briefing later to get my head around the process and to try to work out why you cannot provide this information to us

Answer:

Batch updates of electorate briefs were provided to the Minister's Office on:

- 4 March 2016
- 26 April 2016
- 10 May 2016
- 18 May 2016
- 27 May 2016
- 9 June 2016
- 24 June 2016