

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications

Question No: 13

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Reviews

Senator Ludwig, Joe asked:

Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014:

1. How many new reviews (defined as review, inter-departmental group, inquiry, internal review or similar activity) have been commenced? Please list them including:
 1. the date they were ordered
 2. the date they commenced
 3. the minister responsible
 4. the department responsible
 5. the nature of the review
 6. their terms of reference
 7. the scope of the review
 8. Who is conducting the review
 9. the number of officers, and their classification level, involved in conducting the review
 10. the expected report date
 11. the budgeted, projected or expected costs
 12. If the report will be tabled in parliament or made public
2. For any review commenced or ordered since Budget Estimates in June, 2014, have any external people, companies or contractors being engaged to assist or conduct the review?
 1. If so, please list them, including their name and/or trading name/s and any known alias or other trading names
 2. If so, please list their managing director and the board of directors or equivalent
 3. If yes, for each is the cost associated with their involvement, including a break down for each cost item
 4. If yes, for each, what is the nature of their involvement
 5. If yes, for each, are they on the lobbyist register, provide details.
 6. If yes, for each, what contact has the Minister or their office had with them
 7. If yes, for each, who selected them
 8. If yes, for each, did the minister or their office have any involvement in selecting them,
 1. If yes, please detail what involvement it was
 2. If yes, did they see or provided input to a short list
 3. If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur
 4. If yes, did this involve any verbal discussions with the department
 5. If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur
3. Which reviews are on-going?
 1. Please list them.
 2. What is the current cost to date expended on the reviews?

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4. Have any reviews been stopped, paused or ceased? Please list them.
5. Which reviews have concluded? Please list them.
6. How many reviews have been provided to Government? Please list them and the date they were provided.
7. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
8. What reviews are planned?
 1. When will each planned review be commenced?
 2. When will each of these reviews be concluded?
 3. When will government respond to each review?
 4. Will the government release each review?
 1. If so, when? If not, why not?

Answer:

1. Two new reviews have commenced since Budget Estimates in June, 2014.

Review of the national Triple Zero operator (Triple Zero review)

1. 8 July 2014.
2. 8 July 2014.
3. The Minister for Communications
4. The Department of Communications
5. The Triple Zero review aims to consider how the national Triple Zero operator should adapt to the changing communications environment so that it can continue to support a world class Triple Zero emergency call service into the future. It will also inform the tender process for the national Triple Zero operator to be issued by June 2016.
6. The terms of reference for the review are at:
http://www.communications.gov.au/telephone_services/emergency_call_services/Public_submissions_to_the_triple_zero_review
7. See answers to Question 5 and Question 6.
8. The Department of Communications
9. The review is being conducted as part of the normal business of the Department using existing resources and staff. The Two officers have primary responsibility for the review at the EL2 and EL1 levels, among other responsibilities.
10. The Triple Zero review is expected to deliver its final report for the consideration of Government by March 2015.
11. The review is being conducted as part of the normal business of the Department using existing resources and staff. Specific costs are not identified.
12. There is no legislative or other requirement for the Minister to table the Triple Zero review's final report in Parliament. Public release of the final report is at the Minister's discretion.

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Spectrum Review

1. 8 January 2014.
2. 23 May 2014.
3. The Minister for Communications.
4. The Department of Communications.
5. A review of the radiofrequency spectrum policy and management framework.
6. The terms of reference for the review are at:
http://www.communications.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/230166/Spectrum_Review_Terms_of_Reference.pdf
7. See answers to Question 5 and Question 6.
8. The review is being conducted by the Department of Communications in conjunction with the Australian Communications and Media Authority.
9. The number of officers involved in conducting the review has changed over time, the numbers provided below reflect staffing numbers as at 31 October 2014. Most officers involved in conducting the review are participating in a part-time capacity.

Project Board (met twice during the period 1 May to 31 October 2014):

- 2x Deputy Secretaries (SES Band 3), Department of Communications
- 1x Full-time Board Member, Australian Communications and Media Authority

Project Team (Department of Communications):

- 1x Deputy Secretary (SES Band 3) – part-time
- 1x Assistant Secretary (SES Band 1) – part-time
- 2x Director (EL2) – 1x full-time capacity, 1x part-time
- 1x Assistant Director (EL1) – part-time
- 1x Senior Policy Officer (APS6) – part-time
- 1x Policy Officer (APS5) – part-time
- 1x Policy Officer (APS4) – part-time

Project Team (Australian Communications and Media Authority):

- 1x Full-time Board Member – part-time
 - 1x General Manager (SES Band 2) – part-time
 - 1x Executive Manager (SES Band 1) – part-time
 - 1x Expert Adviser (EL2) – part-time
 - 1x Assistant Manager (EL1) – part-time
 - 1x Policy Officer (APS6) – part-time
10. The Spectrum Review is expected to deliver its final report 6-9 months from commencement (i.e. end of March quarter, 2015).
 11. Expected expenses for the review comprise the salaries of officers working on the review, costs associated with engaging consultants/contractors to provide advice to the review and costs associated with stakeholder engagement. Expected expenditure for consultants/contractors and stakeholder engagement is as follows:
 - The budget for consultants/contractors is \$228,750 (GST exclusive).

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- The budget for stakeholder engagement is \$34,849 (GST exclusive).
12. A decision is yet to be made on whether the report will be made public.
2. Not Applicable
3. 1-2.
Ongoing reviews include:
- **Integrated Public Number Database (IPND)** – the cost of this review has been absorbed within Departmental resourcing.
 - **Triple Zero Review** - the cost of this review has been absorbed within Departmental resourcing.
 - **Spectrum Review** – costs as at 31 October 2014: salaries of the officers working on the review and \$ 16,541 (GST exclusive) for stakeholder engagement.
4. No.
5. Three reviews were concluded in the period 1 May 2014 to 31 October 2014:
- Independent Audit into Broadband Policy and Review of NBN Co Corporate Governance;
 - Review of the NBN Co's Corporate Governance;
 - Cost Benefit Analysis and Review of Regulation of the NBN (the Vertigan Review), comprising:
 - A Statutory Review under section 152EOA of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010;
 - The Independent Cost-Benefit Analysis of Broadband; and
 - The NBN Market and Regulatory Report.
6. Three reviews were completed and the reports provided to Government in the period 1 May 2014 to 31 October 2014:
- The Independent Audit of the NBN Public Policy Processes report was tabled in Parliament on 4 August 2014;
 - The NBN Co's Corporate Governance review report was tabled in Parliament on 13 August 2014; and
 - Cost Benefit Analysis and Review of Regulation of the NBN (the Vertigan Review), comprising:
 - A Statutory Review under section 152EOA of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* – tabled 16 July 2014.
 - The Independent Cost-Benefit Analysis of Broadband – released 27 August 2014 and tabled 2 October 2014.
 - The NBN Market and Regulatory Report – released 1 October 2014 and tabled 2 October 2014.
7. The Government has provided responses to the following reviews:
- Independent Audit into Broadband Policy – Government has responded to five of the seven recommendations through the Productivity Commission's Public Infrastructure

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Inquiry. The Government is considering its response to the two remaining recommendations and the recommendations of the NBN Co Corporate Governance review.

- On 11 December 2014, the Government provided a comprehensive response to the 53 recommendations to regulatory changes made in the Cost-Benefit Analysis of Broadband and Review of Regulation of the NBN. The policy paper, Telecommunications Regulatory and Structural Reform is available at www.communications.gov.au/broadband/telecommunications_regulatory_reform

8. 1-4.

As outlined in the Telecommunications Regulatory and Structural Reform policy paper the Government will initiate a review of the telecommunications-specific anticompetitive conduct regime set out in Part XIB of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

The review will commence in the second half of 2015, and will be concluded and responded to at a date to be advised. A decision is yet to be made on whether the report will be made public.