

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 432

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Fee for Services

Senator Ludwig asked:

Since September 7, 2013:

1. Have any existing services provided by the department / agency moved from being free to a user-pay service? Have any additional fees been placed on existing services? If yes please provide a list and include:
2. Name of the fee and a short description of what it covers.
3. How much is the fee (and is it a flat fee or a percentage of the service).
4. The date the fee came into place.
5. Were any reviews requested, commenced or complemented into the benefits and drawbacks of attaching the fee to the service? If yes, please detail and provide a copy of the review.
6. What consultation was carried out before the fee was put into place?
7. How was the fee put into place (e.g. through legislation, regulation changes etc)?
8. What justification is there for the fee?

Answer:

1. An additional fee has been placed on one existing activity.
2. A wireless audio system fee has been introduced. The fee covers the initial issue charge of a group of more than one wireless audio transmitters.
3. It is a flat charge of \$493 for the initial issue of the licence.
4. 28 October 2014
5. No formal review was required. However the ACMA conducted a public consultation of the proposed taxation and charging arrangements for a new wireless audio system licence type. The discussion paper is available on the ACMA website and can be accessed from this link: <http://www.acma.gov.au/Industry/Spectrum/Radiocomms-licensing/Apparatus-licences/more-affordable-licence-fee-for-professional-wireless-microphone-users>
6. On 10 July 2014 the ACMA released a consultation paper detailing proposed apparatus licence fee arrangements for wireless audio transmitter users in the 520 – 694 MHz band. The paper sought comment from interested stakeholders by 20 August 2014. Four submissions were received. They were from professional wireless audio transmitter users, industry bodies representing the commercial and entertainment technologies sector, and commercial television broadcasting licensees.
7. The fee was put in place via an amendment to the *Radiocommunications (Charges) Determination 2007*. This amendment was registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (FRLI) on 27 October 2014.
8. A wireless audio system has similar characteristics to a land mobile system. Previously, a wireless audio system would be issued under the land mobile licence type and charged a tax and a charge that was similar to a land mobile system licence. However, as part of the

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review of the taxation and charging arrangements associated with wireless audio systems, it was considered that the taxes associated with wireless audio systems were too high. In order to provide a more appropriate taxation arrangement, the ACMA considered it necessary to make a distinction between these two licence types. This in turn meant that the ACMA had to set a new tax for a wireless audio system and an additional issue charge of \$493 for this licence type.