

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Department of Communications and the Arts**

**Question No: 14**

**Program 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 22/10/2015**

**Topic: Mobile Black Spots Programme – Successful sites**

**Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:**

Referring to the selection process for successful sites under the Mobile Black Spot Program:

- (a) How were the successful locations chosen?
- (b) What Federal electorates received funding?
- (c) What is the percentage of eligible Federal electorates that received funding which are held by Liberal Party, National Party, Independent, other minor parties and Australian Labor Party Members of Parliament respectively?
- (d) What weighting was given to recommendations for site selections submitted by Federal Members of Parliament?
- (e) Is the points system (used to determine which site received funding) publically available? If not, please provide.

**Answer:**

- (a) Under Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme, mobile network operators were asked to come forward with proposals to build new or upgraded mobile base stations to deliver improved mobile coverage to one or more of the locations on the Government's database of mobile black spots which had been reported by members of the public.

All proposed base stations included in the applications submitted by the operators were assessed and scored against the assessment criteria outlined in the Programme Guidelines. The assessment criteria included the expected benefits that each base station would deliver, such as the amount of square kilometres, the number of premises, and the length of major transport routes to receive new mobile coverage.

Consideration was also given to the total cost of each base station, the amount of Commonwealth funding being sought, the amount of funding the operator was proposing to co-contribute, and the amount of co-contribution, if any, it had secured from a third party such as a state or local government.

Following the assessment of all proposed base stations against the assessment criteria, a merit list of proposed base stations was established, with funding allocated to those base stations that were above the available \$100 million Round 1 cut off point.

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The Assessment Criteria and points score used to assess and rank the proposed mobile base stations is set out in the Programme Guidelines. These Guidelines are publicly available on the Department of Communications and the Arts' website at [www.communications.gov.au](http://www.communications.gov.au).

- (b) Below is a list of the 57 Federal electorates that will receive one or more funded mobile base stations through Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme.

Ballarat	Corio	Franklin	Lyne	Page
Barker	Cowper	Gilmore	Lyons	Parkes
Bass	Cunningham	Gippsland	Macquarie	Paterson
Bendigo	Dawson	Grey	Mallee	Pearce
Berowra	Dobell	Groom	Maranoa	Richmond
Blair	Durack	Hume	Mayo	Riverina
Braddon	Eden-Monaro	Hunter	McEwen	Wannon
Calare	Fairfax	Indi	McMillan	Wide Bay
Canning	Farrer	Kennedy	McPherson	Wright
Capricornia	Fisher	Leichhardt	Murray	
Casey	Flynn	Lingiari	New England	
Corangamite	Forrest	Longman	O'Connor	

- (c) The Programme Guidelines for Round 1 of the Mobile Blackspot Programme specified that Federal Members of Parliament who represented electorates where less than 50 per cent of the electorate area is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as part of a Major Urban Centre with a population of 100,000 or more, and which are not designated by the Australian Electoral Commission as 'Inner Metropolitan', were invited to nominate up to three priority locations within their electorates to be considered for funding under the Programme.

Under Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme, 75 Federal Members of Parliament representing eligible regional electorates (as above) were invited to nominate up to three priority locations for funding. The table below provides a breakdown of these 75 electorates and also the 57 electorates that received funding:

Party	Electorates eligible for priority locations		Electorates receiving funding	
	No. of eligible electorates	Percentage of eligible electorates	No. of funded electorates	Percentage of funded electorates
Liberal Party of Australia	40	53.4%	30	52.6%
The Nationals	15	20.0%	14	24.5%
Australian Labor Party	17	22.7%	10	17.5%
Independents	1	1.3%	1	1.8%
Katter's Australian Party	1	1.3%	1	1.8%
Palmer United Party	1	1.3%	1	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>

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- (d) The Assessment Criteria and points system used to assess and rank the proposed mobile base stations under Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme included five points being awarded to those base stations which are to deliver improved mobile coverage to an MP priority location.
- (e) The Assessment Criteria used to assess and rank the proposed mobile base stations is set out in the Programme Guidelines. These Guidelines are publicly available on the Department of Communications and the Arts' website at [www.communications.gov.au](http://www.communications.gov.au).