

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 13

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 108, 18/10/2016

Topic: Mobile Black Spots Programme – Funding

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: In round 1, to be awarded funding under the black spot program, what number do I need? Do you have a threshold? If I get to 80 or a 100, do I get it?

Mr Paterson: I think this was identified in the ANAO report. You had an ultimate merit list of about 507 sites, I think, and the government funded 499.

Senator DASTYARI: Yes, I think 507 is the number in here.

Mr Paterson: But there would have been a number of sites that would have been considered not to be value for money and not meriting, so they would not have been on that merit list.

Senator DASTYARI: Yes.

Mr Paterson: If your question is how many points you needed to get to that cut-off, I do not have that information. I would have to take it on notice.

Senator DASTYARI: But are we talking roughly 60, 100, 200?

Mr Paterson: I just do not know, I am afraid.

Senator DASTYARI: That is a worthless figure then. Saying it has gone from five to 10—of what? That is meaningless. It is an arbitrary figure then. What does it mean? You are saying the NP contribution has doubled. I am saying, 'In relation to what?' And you say saying you cannot tell me the relation.

Mr Paterson: It will definitely have an impact because you are getting more points. The extent of the impact depends on how many points you get for other things.

Answer:

All base stations needed to demonstrate value for money to the Commonwealth to be recommended for (and awarded) funding.

The round 1 Mobile Black Spot Program Guidelines did not include a minimum threshold score for the point-scoring process. The point-scoring was used to rank base stations on the merit list. The more points a proposed base station scored in the assessment process, the higher on the merit list it was ranked.