

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: 15

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 114, 18/10/2016

Topic: MBSP – ANAO Draft Report

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: And when was the ANAO report published?

Mr Paterson: It was tabled in parliament in September.

Senator DASTYARI: When were you given the draft?

Mr Paterson: We would have been given—

Senator DASTYARI: You tabled that you had a response.

Mr Paterson: We would have been given the very earliest draft. The final draft—

Senator DASTYARI: When were you given the first draft?

Mr Paterson: I do not know when we got the first draft, but it may have borne no major resemblance to the final draft.

Senator DASTYARI: Sure, but when were you given it?

Mr Paterson: These are iterative documents; they are developed over time.

Senator DASTYARI: Sure, but that was not the question. The question was: when were you given it?

Mr Paterson: We will have to take that on notice, Senator.

Senator DASTYARI: Was it this year or last year?

Mr Paterson: It would have been this year, I would expect, but I will have to take it on notice.

Senator DASTYARI: Surely you know this: was it before or after the election? You are the point person, the draft report would come to you.

Mr Paterson: I am trying to recall, Senator. I was not in the job at the time.

Mr Robinson: Sorry, Senator, is your question when we would have seen a draft report?

Senator DASTYARI: Yes.

Mr Robinson: Was it before the election? It was before the election.

Senator DASTYARI: Was it before the draft guidelines were issued for round 2?

Mr Robinson: We will have to take that on notice.

Senator DASTYARI: How could you not know that? That is such a basic thing. If you have draft guidelines and there is an ANAO report about round 1—

CHAIR: Senator Dastyari, they have taken it on notice. They have indicated they do not have that information. Asking them why they do not know it is not really helping.

Senator DASTYARI: But it does not pass the believability test.

CHAIR: They have taken it on notice. Move on if you have another question.

Mr Paterson: The guidelines were issued in February. Mr Robinson has confirmed that we would have seen a draft ANAO report before the election—we are talking around May or June. What we need to take on notice is what happened between February and June.

Senator DASTYARI: The ANAO report includes a response from the department, so you obviously saw it before May. The question is whether it was before February.

Mr Paterson: I doubt we would have seen a draft before February that was in a close-to-final state because it was so much time before we got the report that we could comment on. We will have to take it on notice.

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Answer:

The ANAO provided the Department of Communications and the Arts with its initial Report Preparation Paper in relation to its audit of round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Program on 22 February 2016, to which the Department responded on 22 March 2016.

Following consideration of the Department's response to the Report Preparation Paper, the ANAO provided the Department with its proposed (draft) audit report on 13 April 2016. The Department provided its formal agency response to the ANAO's draft report on 10 May 2016. The ANAO's final audit report was tabled in Parliament on 1 September 2016.