

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: 17

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 117, 18/10/2016

Topic: MBSP – Awareness forums

Senator Chisholm, Anthony asked:

Senator CHISHOLM: In relation to the awareness forums, just going into a bit more detail around that: I imagine they were held in halls, in these communities, and I was just wondering what role the department played in booking these venues for these awareness forums to be held.

Mr Paterson: I will have to take that on notice, but it is very similar to the earlier question we took on notice about what support and whether the department paid any money towards these sorts of things. I would suspect that we did not do anything and it was organised by the parliamentary secretary's office. But I will have to take it on notice.

Senator CHISHOLM: For thoroughness in terms of what we get out of it, I would also be wanting to know—because I imagine that for awareness forums you have to raise awareness that they are on, whether that be through direct mail or paid media or whatever it is so that the people who live in these electorates can know to come along—whether that is also something you could come back to us on: whether the department paid for any media or likewise to promote these events.

Mr Paterson: Yes, I am happy to do that. Obviously our answer will be constrained by whether we had any role and whether there were local advertisements and so forth and if they were not organised by us we would not necessarily be aware of them. But we can check our records for anything that we did.

Senator O'NEILL: But you did do media monitoring, did you?

Mr Paterson: Yes, exactly. If we came through on the media we can attempt to go back through those records, yes.

Senator O'NEILL: And you did provide briefs?

Mr Paterson: My understanding is that if a brief was requested we would have provided a pretty basic background brief. But yes, we can check those records.

Answer:

The Department of Communications and the Arts did not assist with promoting, organising or provide any funding towards any of the regional communications forums.

Upon request, the Department provided background briefing within existing resources.