

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 260

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 3 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Digital Radio

Senator Fisher asked:

Mr Tanner: We have certainly indicated that with 14 megahertz, two multiplexes in every market, would be tight and would involve a lot of compromises compared to what you might call traditional planning approaches, but we have not gone much further than that.

Senator FISHER: How long ago did you provide that advice, and has the government responded to it?

Mr Tanner: I am not sure when that advice was provided. I would have to take that on notice. The government is currently considering submissions to a review of technological options that is mandated in legislation. That is where I understand the government is at.

Answer:

The ACMA has been liaising with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the Minister on a range of digital radio spectrum related matters. These discussions have been ongoing and have occurred both before and after the Minister directed the ACMA to retain 14 MHz of VH Band III spectrum for a potential rollout of digital radio services in regional areas.

Specific dates where the ACMA provided advice to government concerning spectrum matters associated with the rollout of digital radio in regional areas were 11 September 2009, 21 May 2010 and 15 December 2010.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 261

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 7 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Spectrum Auction

Senator Troeth asked:

Mr Tanner: The auction is a subset of the reallocation. I guess the auction is the item that everybody is going to focus on, but bear in mind that before that auction we need to prepare what Chris has already talked about, the marketing plan, which is basically the prospectus that the government puts out into the market. An enormous amount of information and detail has to go into that, and it has to be right. Proceeding in parallel, we will be working with the industry to deliver the restack so that at the time the licences finally come into effect the spectrum will be vacated.

Ms Cahill has already mentioned that we are also taking some action in relation to the 2.5 gigahertz band—in fact, we have recently decided that we are going to auction the 700 megahertz and 2.5 gigahertz bands together in a single auction. It will be 230 megahertz of spectrum probably for advanced mobile telecommunications; we will let the market decide the use. That is an enormous amount of spectrum relative to what is currently in use for practically anything. So I think it is a very big microeconomic reform in total, if we could carry this off in a timely fashion. You asked about the resourcing. It is entirely funded out of a series of specific NPP grants. I could take on notice the exact sum.

Senator TROETH: Yes, if you could.

Answer:

The Digital Transition Division takes primary carriage of all ACMA work related to the digitisation of television and digital radio broadcasting. Approximately 40 ACMA staff work on digital switchover regulatory policy, planning and licensing, coverage evaluation and field operations.

A series of NPP grants, allocated progressively since 2008-09, fund the ACMA's work on managing the digital switchover:

- Switchover Mildura Pilot: \$1.9m over 2 years commencing 2008-09;
- Digital Television Switchover: \$8.5m over 4 years commencing 2008-09;
- Switchover SA, VIC & QLD: \$3.8m over 3 years commencing 2009-10;
- Signal Deficiencies: \$20m over 6 years commencing 2009-10; and
- Digital Television Switchover: \$2.3m over 3 years commencing 2011-12.

Digital television switchover is a key tranche of the ACMA's activities towards yielding the digital dividend.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 262

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 8 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Complaint handling

Senator Troeth asked:

Senator TROETH: You may need to take this on notice, but what percentage of the regulator's time and operational costs are taken up by that role of handling complaints?

Ms McNeill: That is something I would need to take on notice.

Senator TROETH: Can you also give me a ballpark figure for total costs and their percentage of the overall ACMA budget?

Ms McNeill: We will take that on notice.

Answer:

You may need to take this on notice, but what percentage of the regulator's time and operational costs are taken up by that role of handling complaints?

2.29 per cent of the ACMA's time and 1.56 per cent of its operational costs in the 2010-11 financial year was spent on handling broadcast complaints:

Handling broadcast complaints refers to the activities of responding to complaints and enquiries from members of the public and investigating broadcasters' compliance with codes of practice, standards, licence conditions and provisions of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

What is the total cost involved in handling broadcasting complaints and what percentage of the ACMA's overall budget does the total cost represent?

The total cost involved in handling broadcasting complaints in the 2010-11 financial year was \$1,564,413. This cost represents 1.56 per cent of the ACMA's overall budget for 2010-11.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 263

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 11 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Internal Audit

Senator Fisher asked:

Ms Carlos: It was part of a general review and refinement of all of our processes. We undertake internal reviews of our processes on a continual basis, and this was one such review internally.

Senator FISHER: For how many years had you been operating where you were happy to get a consolidated set?

Ms Carlos: I do not have that information with me. I am happy to provide it to you on notice.

Senator FISHER: Two years, five years or 10 years?

Mr Chapman: We will take that on notice, suffice to say that clearly we traditionally operated on that approach and this represents a change of approach.

Answer:

The ACMA has been receiving a consolidated set of accounts for eleven years.

Records prior to this period are unavailable.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 264

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 14-15 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Internal Audit

Senator Fisher asked:

Senator FISHER: Okay. Perhaps on notice, can you, Ms Carlos, provide the committee with information as to which sectors of industry, without necessarily identifying individuals, have said that this new way is useful to them and how; and secondly—

Mr Chapman: Sorry, if I could just clarify: when you say 'the sectors of the industry', what does that mean?

Senator FISHER: You tell me the easiest way—let me swing it back to you—

Mr Chapman: What information are you seeking to elicit? Is it whether it is regional and metropolitan, TV or radio, Western Australian or South Australian? You are not asking, presumably, for the specific identity of those who have been providing information.

Senator FISHER: No, I said other than doing that. I am not asking for that. Find a way to carve it up, please, to substantiate and illustrate Ms Carlos's claim, which I am sure is based on the 50 per cent of organisations that Ms Carlos earlier said have been doing it the new way. Find a way in which to carve them up, in a purely empirical sense, that substantiates the claim that they have found this new process useful to them, which I understand Ms Carlos to have said they did. Ms Carlos went on to say, I thought, that it has also been useful to ACMA, so I will ask on notice that you provide that same substantiation: how has that new information been useful to ACMA?

CHAIR: I do not know how ACMA are going, but I am totally confused.

Senator FISHER: I am very clear, and I will go again if you like. Can Ms Carlos respond?

CHAIR: Senator Fisher, I am talking, please. I think the questions you asking are extremely long, extremely detailed and quite complex, it seems to me.

Senator FISHER: So?

CHAIR: It might be that Mr Chapman might want to take some of them on notice so he can go through it in detail.

Senator FISHER: I am suggesting these be taken on notice, if you had been listening fully instead of emailing the minister.

CHAIR: You have to make your questions intelligible if you are to get an answer. That is all the point I am making.

Senator FISHER: I have placed those two questions on notice. I think they are quite intelligible.

CHAIR: Good luck!

Senator FISHER: Ms Carlos, are you happy with the questions now?

Ms Carlos: Yes. We can take them on notice.

Answer:

Due to the simplification of the Broadcasting Licence Fees process, licensees have identified that the licence level reporting option is beneficial to them, by reducing reporting and audit costs per licence, and only having to prepare, and have audited, a simplified balance sheet, and profit and loss statement for each licence, rather than a full financial report and note disclosures for each licence as required in the past.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

The new process has removed red tape and simplified reporting processes. Some consolidated broadcasting licensees have stated that the ACMA's simplification process has improved their accounting information, audit services, and provided them improved internal and external reporting.

The following table presents the number of commercial radio and television broadcasters that have chosen to provide consolidated accounts, or licence level accounts to the ACMA, and the number of licences that are reported under each of the options. The percentage take up of licence level reporting since it was provided as an option in 2008-09, is outlined in the following table for the 2009-10 reporting year.

	Provided consolidated accounts	Provided licence level accounts	Percentage of total that have chosen to provide licence level accounts
Number of Commercial Radio Broadcasters	5	32	86 per cent
Number of Commercial Television Broadcasters	8	4	33 per cent
Total Commercial Broadcasters	13	36	73 per cent
Commercial Radio Licences (number)	87	186	68 per cent
Commercial Television Licences (number)	54	17	24 per cent
Total Licences	141	203	59 per cent

So I will ask on notice that you provide that same substantiation: how has that new information been useful to ACMA?

The licence level information has been useful to the ACMA in administering the broadcasting licence fees in accordance with the legislation, as the consolidated financial statements show aggregated earnings at the level of the parent company or corporate group, and do not show earnings by reference to the services provided under each particular licence. From this the ACMA cannot materially verify the gross earnings for each licence held, therefore, there is no visibility of earnings relating to services provided under each individual licence.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 265

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 15 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Internal Audit

Senator Fisher asked:

Senator FISHER: Thank you. My final question on that aspect, and I will put this on notice as well, is: of the I think you said 50 per cent of organisations that are now doing it this new way, can you on notice tell me the extent to which you are able to substantiate how many of those which are doing it the same way as they did before.

Ms Carlos: I am not quite clear on that.

Senator FISHER: For those who have only ever operated as a sole entity as opposed to a consolidated group, there is no difference, is there?

Ms Carlos: I see your point. We can take that on notice.

Answer:

Twenty broadcasters with a total of 121 licences, have transferred from the consolidated process to the new licence level reporting.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 266

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: Page 20 (16/06/2011)

Topic: Online Surveys

Senator Wortley asked:

Senator WORTLEY: You may have to take this notice. Are you able to tell us about any online surveys around the world that involve students or young people completing them and filing them for research?

Ms Wright: I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

To date there have been few research projects exploring children and young peoples' attitudes and behaviours around cybersafety that have incorporated an online survey component as part of their methodology.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA's) 2009 study *Click and Connect: Young Australians' use of social media*¹ used an online survey design to collect quantitative data on young people's use of social networking services. The survey sample consisted of 819 respondents aged between 8 and 17 years and their parents. Children and young people were recruited to this study by approaching their parents who were a part of an Industry accredited online panel (e.g. ResearchNow online panel). Each parent was asked for their child's participation in a study via an invitation email which indicated that the survey would address their children's internet use and the associated safety issues. The online sample was stratified within age, gender and location (metropolitan versus regional/rural). The survey data was subsequently weighted using the latest ABS census data to ensure that it would be representative of Australian households. The online survey complemented an earlier qualitative stage using triangulation of three research approaches.

Other research into young peoples' use and experiences of the online world has mostly employed a range of fairly well established qualitative and quantitative methodologies such as face-to-face focus groups, telephone surveys, media-use diaries, and self-administered questionnaires; for example, the various reports produced by the Pew Internet and American Life Project on teenagers², also the Kaiser Family Foundation *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-year olds*³.

¹'Click and Connect: Young Australians' use of online social media', prepared for the ACMA by GfK BlueMoon, July 2009 http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311797

²Pew Internet and American Life project (various) <http://pewinternet.org/topics/Teens.aspx>

³Rideout, V, Foehr, U, Roberts, D 'Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18- year olds', Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010 <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/8010.cfm>

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

The largest study of children's online behaviours would appear to be the *EU Kids Online II*⁴ project, conducted by Professor Sonia Livingstone and Dr Leslie Haddon of the London School of Economics, which involved a random stratified sample across 25 European countries of 25,142 children aged 9-16 who use the internet, plus one of their parents. The survey was conducted in children's homes, as a face-to-face interview. It also included a self-completion section for sensitive questions.

A review of the risks children face from the internet and video games, commissioned by the British Prime Minister in 2007 and conducted by Dr Tanya Byron did involve some online participation by young people. The review incorporated a 'call for evidence' which enabled participation in the review process either via an online form, by email, or by ordinary mail. A total of 350 responses were received. Dr Byron also engaged with the youth audience through the review's website and profiles created on various social networking sites.⁵

⁴ Livingstone, S, Haddon, L, Lorzig, A, Olafsson, K, 'Risks and Safety on the Internet: the perspective of European children. Full findings'. LSE, London. EU Kids Online, 2011

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20Online%20reports.aspx>

⁵ 'Safer Children in a Digital World: the report of the Byron Review', March 2008

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00334-2008>

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 267

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Advertising

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What communications programs has the department undertaken, or are planning to undertake FYTD?
- b. For each program, what is the total spend?

Answer:

Program Name	Total Forecast Spend 2010-11
Marine Radio Information	\$19,575.33
VoIP consumer awareness campaign	\$49,596.87

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 268

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Caption Quality

Senator Fifield asked:

1. With reference to recommendations 7 and 8 of the Media Access Review Final report about caption quality:
 - a. Has the ACMA developed criteria that the ACMA can use to assess the quality of captions?
 - b. If so what are those criteria?
 - c. Has ACMA conducted consultation in developing caption quality criteria?
 - d. If so, who was consulted and when were they consulted?

Answer:

1. a. No. However, the ACMA, in partnership with stakeholders, is developing criteria by reference to which the quality of captions can be assessed.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. Yes. On 16 September 2010, the ACMA hosted a captioning workshop which was attended by over 40 representatives of people with a hearing or vision impairment, government, broadcasters and captioning providers. An outcome of that workshop was the establishment of a core working committee to develop captioning quality indicators. To date, the captioning committee has met on four occasions (November 2010, February 2011, March 2011 and April 2011).
- d.

Organisation consulted	September 2010 ¹	November 2010, February 2011, March 2011 and April 2011 ²
ABC	✓	✓
Ai Media	✓	✓
Arts Access Australia	✓	
ASTRA	✓	✓
Australian Communications Consumer Action Network	✓	✓
Australian Communication Exchange	✓	
Australian Human Rights Commission	✓	✓ (April 2011)
AUSTAR	✓	
Better Hearing Australia	✓	
Blind Citizens Australia	✓	
Captioning Subtitle International	✓	✓
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital	✓	✓

¹ Consultation occurred at the captioning workshop convened by the ACMA in September 2010.

² Consultation occurred at the ACMA-hosted captioning committee meetings held on these dates. Out of session consultation occurred, and continues to occur, in between meeting dates.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Organisation consulted	September 2010 ¹	November 2010, February 2011, March 2011 and April 2011 ²
Economy		
Deaf Australia	✓	✓
Deafness Forum	✓	✓
FOXTEL	✓	
Free TV Australia	✓	✓
Media Access Australia	✓	✓
Network Ten	✓	✓
Nine Network	✓	✓
Red Bee Media Australia	✓	✓
SBS	✓	✓
Seven Network	✓	✓
Southern Cross Media	✓	✓
Vision Australia	✓	

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 269

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Electronic Program Guides

Senator Fifield asked:

1. With respect to recommendation 14 of the Media Access Review Final Report about development of a code of practice for electronic program guides:
 - a. Did the ACMA consider including accessibility features as a key requirement for electronic program guides?
 - b. Will ACMA develop a code of practice for electronic program guides by 2012? If yes, what date will it commence?
 - c. What is the current status of the development of the code of practice for electronic program for electronic program guides?

Answer:

- a. The ACMA did not consider accessibility features that could be included in EPG as a key requirement at the time it made the EPG Principles. The Principles are directed at broadcaster requirements for transmission rather than accessibility features that are predominantly the function of the receiving equipment. The EPG Principles also predate the recommendations arising from the Media Access Review final report, which was not tabled until 3 December 2010: some 18 months after the publication of the EPG Principles. The ACMA notes that the accessibility features listed in the discussion to recommendation 14 in the Media Access Review final report are predominantly features that are the property of the receiving equipment or broadcaster offerings rather than features of the EPG. EPG accessibility features are largely limited to providing information that allows disabled consumers to search for program content with accessibility features. The ACMA will need to turn its mind to the issue of accessibility features in EPG if outcomes of the proposed audio description trial mentioned within the Media Access Review Final Report are realised.
- b. The ACMA considered the need for an industry code for EPG at the time it made the EPG Principles and subsequently in response to the Minister's direction to the ACMA to determine a technical standard in relation to Parental Lock. Part of the Ministers direction included a requirement that the ACMA consider whether to request an industry code in relation to EPGs. On each occasion, the ACMA decided not to seek a code of practice as it considered that industry efforts to develop an effective EPG were proceeding satisfactorily.

In concert with the development of the EPG Principles, the ACMA implemented a system of monitoring and performance reporting against broadcaster provision of EPG. This system was enhanced at the time the parental lock standard was made by the ACMA to ensure the reporting process clearly indicated whether broadcaster provided EPG

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

contained sufficient information to facilitate the effective operation of parental lock in consumer equipment

During the period that the ACMA actively monitored EPG performance, broadcasters upgraded their EPG systems to a point where all free to air broadcasting networks are reliably providing EPGs that meet the benchmark set by the EPG principles. As broadcasters were performing at or above the level described by the EPG Principles the ACMA saw no necessity for the request of an industry code regarding EPG.

- c. The ACMA keeps the need for a code of practice under review.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 270

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: National Relay Service Failure

Senator Mitch Fifield asked:

- a. There was a reported disruption to the National Relay Service in Brisbane for almost 24 hours on January 12. How many people do you estimate to have been affected by the disruption?
- b. What measures has the ACMA/NRS taken to ensure that this failure does not occur again in Brisbane, or at any other main office?
- c. Has the ACMA considered and responded to the report by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network regarding the disruption?
- d. If not when will it make a response to the report?

Answer:

- a. The extreme weather conditions and flooding in Queensland on 12 January this year caused disruptions to services provided by the National Relay Service, other than the emergency '106' text service

On an average weekday, the National Relay Service handles approximately 2500 calls including 2 emergency calls. The ACMA and the NRS outreach provider, Westwood Spice, worked closely together to inform NRS users of the disruptions, and the ACMA media releases included Auslan interpretation to better inform NRS users.

While the extent of disruption to telecommunications services during the Queensland floods is illustrative of the risks to physical infrastructure in such extreme events, the combined efforts of the relay service provider (the Australian Communication Exchange), the ACMA, Optus and Telstra ensured all emergency calls made using a teletypewriter to the '106' emergency number continued to be answered during the shutdown period, by re-routing these calls to a Telstra exchange where relay officers were relocated

- b. The relay provider offers a national service from its Brisbane office.

The ACMA is working closely with the relay service provider, the Australian Communication Exchange, to improve the resilience of the service. These improvements are expected to include:

- establishing formal arrangements to utilise Telstra's Mount Gravatt Exchange as an additional back-up to the current NRS disaster recovery centre in emergencies, and
- prioritising all calls to Triple Zero that are made via the NRS, whether using a teletypewriter (TTY), the internet relay service or otherwise.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

c & d. The ACCAN March report was welcomed by the ACMA when released in March 2011.

The report commends actions to a number of parties including broadcasters, emergency service providers and Commonwealth and State government agencies. It usefully highlights possible areas for mitigating disruptions to the National Relay Service in the future, and areas of potential enhancement, particularly in relation to accessing emergency services.

The ACMA briefed the Chief Executive Officer and staff of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network in June 2011 on strategies to address areas of mutual concern and to provide users with the protections they need in emergency situations.

The ACMA has undertaken to keep ACCAN informed on the progress with improvements to the resilience of the NRS service delivery,

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 271

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Has the agency within the portfolio received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- b. How many FOI requests has the agency received?
- c. How many have been granted or denied?
- d. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests?

Answer:

- a. In making any decision under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has regard to the advice and guidance provided by the Australian Information Commissioner (see subsection 93A(2) of the FOI Act). If the circumstances of the matter require it, the ACMA may also take legal advice about individual requests from internal or external legal advisers.
- b. Between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 the ACMA received 21 valid FOI requests.
- c. Of the 21 valid requests received:
 - 14 resulted in access being granted in full or in part
 - 2 resulted in access being refused
 - 2 were withdrawn
 - 3 are on-going.
- d. None.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 272

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Monitoring

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the agency in FYTD?
- b. Which agency or agencies provided these services?

Answer:

- a. The total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, and electronic media transcripts by the ACMA was \$78,000.
- b. The services were provided by Media Monitors and Meltwater.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 273

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Social Media

Senator Fisher asked:

Has there been any changes to agency social media or protocols about staff access and useage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since October 2010? If yes, please explain.

Answer:

No.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 274

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing – Contractors

Senator Fisher asked:

1. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.
2. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details.
3. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.
4. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.
5. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.
6. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.
7. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.
8. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.
9. Has the agency within the portfolio ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

1. No, the agency has not employed Hawker Britton in any capacity, and is not considering employing Hawker Britton.
2. No, the agency has not employed Shannon's Way in any capacity, and is not considering employing Shannon's Way.
3. No, the agency has not employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity, and is not considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

4. No, the agency has not employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity, and is not considering employing McCann-Erickson.
5. No, the agency has not employed Cutting Edge in any capacity, and is not considering employing Cutting Edge.
6. No, the agency has not employed Ikon Communications in any capacity, and is not considering employing Ikon Communications.
7. No, the agency has not employed CMAX Communications in any capacity, and is not considering employing CMAX Communications.
8. No, the agency has not employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity, and is not considering employing Boston Consulting Group.
9. No, the agency has not employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity, and is not considering employing McKinsey & Company.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 275

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payments of Accounts

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Has the agencies within the portfolio paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)? If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.
- b. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio/department agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
- c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

- a. Yes, the ACMA has achieved a timely compliance rate of 99.84 per cent. The ACMA's payment statistics for the 2010 – 2011 financial year are illustrated in the following table:

Period	Total number of invoices processed	Number of invoiced paid "late"	Compliance Rate (on number of invoices)	Total amount paid to Contractors and Consultants	Value of invoices not paid within 30 days
1 July 10 – 30 June 11	1,899	3*	99.84%	\$8,395,717.53	\$32,026.42

*Details as follows:

Consultant / Contractor	Value of invoices not paid within 30 days	Reason
Ipsos Public Affairs (Pty) Ltd	\$ 29,520	Annual consumer survey/late invoice
Victorian Deaf Society (2)	\$ 2,506	Invoices submitted late

b. Nil.

c. Nil.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 276

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does your agency within the portfolio subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
- b. Does your agencies within the portfolio subscribe to newspapers? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
- c. Does your agencies within the portfolio subscribe to magazines? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines

Answer:

- a. Yes. The reason that the ACMA subscribes to pay TV is that it oversees and monitors various content, technical issues and responds to complaints under the Broadcast Services Act, for example, the anti-siphoning rules.

The subscription cost in 2010-11 was \$32,073.97, and is estimated to be approximately \$20,000 for 2011-12, due to a reduced number of outlets being required.

The ACMA pay TV channels are provided as part of a 'Business Package'. This is the most economical 12 month subscription available. The channels are; BBC World, Bloomberg Television, CNBC, CNN, Fox News Channel, Fox Sports 1 and 2 and 3, A-PAC, Sky News Australia, Sky News for Business and the Weather Channel.

- b. Yes. The ACMA as a regulator keeps abreast of, and monitors media issues in the industry as they emerge. The ACMA subscribes to the Australian, The Age, Financial Review, Canberra Times and the Daily Telegraph. The total cost in 2010-11 was \$16,025.
- c. Yes. The ACMA subscribes to a range of industry journals and publications, specific to the organisation's activities, including numerous titles, such as the Economist, Lexis Nexis Law Policy and Harvard Business Review etc. Costings and specific details are not available for these as they are purchased through a range of means such as credit cards, single invoices and reimbursements. These methods and costs are not specifically identifiable with the financial system. Some of these costs may be included in the above figure for Subscriptions ie \$32,073.97.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 277

Program No. ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did each portfolio agency within the portfolio spend on legal services FYTD within the department and agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did each portfolio agency within the portfolio spend on legal services FYTD from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- c. What sum did each portfolio agency within the portfolio spend on legal services FYTD from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did each portfolio agency within the portfolio spend on legal services FYTD from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

- a. The agency expenditure on legal services for the financial year ended 30/06/11 was \$4,206,315. This figure included:

• direct salary costs	\$2,480,818
• indirect salary costs	\$989,101
• direct overhead	\$227,344
• indirect overhead	\$17,263
• legal unit overhead	\$90,843
• learning and development	\$26,923
• external solicitors, including AGS and OLDP	\$305,186
• barristers	\$60,451
• disbursements	\$8386

The legal services provided included litigation, legal advice, legislative drafting and other miscellaneous forms of legal assistance.

- b. The agency expenditure on legal services for the financial year ended 30/06/11 with the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) was \$185,877. This was expenditure on professional fees for a range of litigation matters and other miscellaneous legal advice and assistance.
- c. The agency expenditure on legal services for the financial year ended 30/06/11 with private firms was \$27,315 paid to Blake Dawson Waldron for legal advice and assistance.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

- d. The agency expenditure for the financial year ended 30/06/11 on legal services from other sources was \$152,444 consisting of :
- briefs to Counsel amounting to \$60,451. These were for litigation services and for miscellaneous legal advice and assistance; and
 - instructions to the Office of Legislative Drafting and Publishing (OLDP) amounting to \$91,993. These were for legislative drafting services and associated legal assistance.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 278

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

Senator Fisher asked:

Please detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio agency. Include what type of course, the cost and how many participants.

Answer:

The ACMA had 54 employees participating in tertiary studies through the Studies Assistance Program in the 2010-11 financial year. The Authority paid \$136,529 in studies assistance during this period.

The ACMA conducted 31 in-house training courses in the 2010-11 financial year. The table below outlines the type of course, participant numbers and the cost.

Course Name	No. of Courses	Attendees	Cost (excl GST)
Presentation Skills	3	24	\$7,472.32
Project Management	2	14	\$4,202.55
Dear Minister	1	14	\$9,745.20
Effective Business Writing	2	19	\$5,544.00
Telecommunications Training (2 day course)	3	32	\$24,038.78
Broadband and Voice Service Evolution	1	6	\$2,487.83
NBN Technical Overview	2	19	\$6,513.95
Time Management	2	16	\$3,600.00
Life Balance & Stress Management	1	7	\$2,700.00
Managing Teams and Team Dynamics	3	30	\$8,138.70
Skills for Effective Communication	3	33	\$13,644.16
Brief Writing Training	2	12	\$8,820.00
Diploma of Project Management	3	34	\$37,800.00
Essential Writing Skills for APS 5 & 6	1	16	\$2,791.80
Broadcast Planning Systems	1	20	\$18,234.00
Radio Frequency Systems – Specialised Training	1	6	\$6,480.00
Totals	31	302	\$162,213.29

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 279

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each portfolio agency within the portfolio, please provide the following information FYTD:

1. Total spending on these services
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
3. The number of employees who have utilised these services and their employment classification
4. The names of all service providers engaged

For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), please provide:

- a. The name and nature of the service purchased
- b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
- c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
- d. The total number of hours involved for all employees
- e. The total amount spent on the service
- f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part
- iv. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

1. Total expenditure was \$369,422 (excl GST)
2. 41 employees comprising 15 X SESB1, 19 X EL2, 6 X EL1 and 1 X APS6
3. 41 employees comprising 15 X SESB1, 19 X EL2, 6 X EL1 and 1 X APS6
4. Mt Eliza Executive Education, Melbourne Business School, Centre for Public Management, Performance Development Pty Ltd, Positive Psychology Institute, TG Coaching and Consulting, Xplore for Success Pty Ltd and AB Communicates Pty Ltd

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

4.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Service Provider	Nature of the Service	One-on-one or group based	No. of employees & classification	No. of hours	Amount spent \$	Fee description
Mt Eliza Executive Education, Melbourne Business School	A three year leadership development program designed for all ACMA employees at the SES 1 and EL 2 classification. The program includes four residentials (10 days in total), large group project, personal leadership development project and coaching	group based	15 X SESB1, 19 X EL2	2,737	340,000	\$170,000 per program
Centre for Public Management	A four day course 'From Management to Leadership'	group based	1 X EL1	32	4,072	training course fee
Performance Development Pty Ltd	A two day course 'Management and Leadership Skills'	group based	1 X EL1	16	810	training course fee
Positive Psychology Institute	Executive Coaching	one-on-one	1 X EL1	12	7,200	per hour rate
TG Coaching and Consulting	Executive Coaching	one-on-one	1 X APS6	2.5	500	per hour rate
Xplore for Success Pty Ltd	Executive Coaching	one-on-one	2 X EL1	12	6,000	per hour rate
AB Communicates Pty Ltd	Mentoring Services	one-on-one	3 X SESB1, 1 X EL1	40	10,840	per hour rate

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

4. Service Provider	(i) Location Used	(ii) No. of employees	(iii) Total No. of hours	(iv) Location Costs
Mt Eliza Executive Education, Melbourne Business School	a) Mt Eliza Campus, Mt Eliza, Victoria	19	1,520	\$59,248
	b) Sydney Conference & Training Centre, Sydney, New South Wales	15	1,200	\$49,680
Centre for Public Management	Centre for Public Management, Canberra	1	32	\$813
Performance Development Pty Ltd	Performance and Development Training Centre	1	16	Nil (included in course fees)

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 280

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Please list how many staff in each portfolio agency within the portfolio are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
- b. Please list which portfolio agencies are providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments.

Answer:

- a. Eligibility for the Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme is determined by the Family Assistance Office and is subject to a number of criteria including a work and income test.
- b. The ACMA registered to participate in the scheme and was prepared to receive and make payments from 1 January 2011. To date no claims have been received and therefore no payments have been made.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 281

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Workpoint Space

Senator Fisher asked:

1. For each portfolio agency office please list the occupied workpoint space allocated per person.
2. Does this adhere to the Government's Commonwealth Property Management Guidelines (the Guidelines)?
 - I. If yes, please explain if any refurbishment was required to meet the Guidelines and what the costs were.
 - a. What savings did each portfolio agency achieve by meeting the Guidelines? Please itemise each portfolio agency separately.
 - b. How much of these savings has each portfolio agency kept? Please itemise each portfolio agency separately.
 - II. If no, please give details why it does not, including whether an exemption has been received by the Finance Minister.
 - a. What funding has been taken from each portfolio agency because they do not meet the Guidelines? Please itemise each portfolio agency separately.
 - b. Are there plans to meet the Guidelines? Please explain.

Answer:

Offices

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Canberra, Belconnen-Purple Building – | 24.9 psm |
| Canberra Part Magenta Building Level 4 – | 15.3 psm |
| Canberra Part Magenta Building Level 3 – | 19.7 psm |
| Sydney, CBD - Level 15 & 16 Tower 1, Darling Park – | 19.8 psm |
| Sydney, CBD-Level 12 Tower 3, Darling Park – | 13.2 psm |
| Melbourne, CBD - Levels 42 – 44 The Tower – | 18.2 psm |
| Brisbane, City Fringe – Part Level 1, 424 Upper Roma Street – | 23.7 psm |
| | Average 19.25psm |

Technical Offices

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| Parramatta – Level 3, 100 George Street – | 16.2 psm |
| Quoin Ridge, Tasmania – 601 Back Tea Tree Road – | 182.8 psm |
- 2.II. No – The design of the Canberra office is 30 years old, has uniquely shaped floor plates that do not allow compliance with the density requirements as specified in the Government's Commonwealth Property Management Guidelines. As an existing lease, no exemption from the Finance Minister is required.

No – The Sydney office has a triangular design floor plates that do not efficiently utilise space, compounded by an aged fit-out that also circumvents efficient use. As an existing lease, no exemption from the Finance Minister is required.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

No – The Melbourne office inherited a pre-existing fit out, which does not allow for an efficient use of the floor. As an existing lease, no exemption from the Finance Minister is required.

No – The Parramatta, Brisbane and Quoin Ridge locations accommodate the ACMA's field operations staff. The premises incorporate specialised technical monitoring equipment within the leased area, compliance to the guidelines measured against operational specifications is not possible, and there are no current plans to do so. No exemption from the Finance Minister applies.

2.II. a. Funding totalling \$0.864m has been deducted from the ACMA's budget over four years commencing in 2010/11 through until 2013/14 demonstrated as follows:

2010/11	\$ 31,000
2011/12	\$160,000
2012/13	\$164,000
2013/14	\$509,000

2.II. b. The ACMA will endeavour to comply with these requirements as it reviews lease opportunities and new fitouts.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 282

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many permanent staff recruited this FYTD?
- b. What classification are these staff?
- c. How many temporary positions exist or have been created this FYTD?
- d. This FYTD, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

a. There were 54 permanent (ongoing) staff recruited in the financial year to 16th June 2011.

b. The classifications of these staff are:

Classification	No. of staff
APS3	1
APS4	5
APS5	6
APS6	21
EL1	17
EL2	4

c. 43 temporary (non-ongoing) positions were created in the financial year to 16th June 2011 with 44 temporary (non-ongoing) positions existing at 16th June 2011.

d. The ACMA employed 43 employees on contract in the financial year to 16th June. The average length of their non-ongoing contracts was 9.8 months.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 283

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing – Efficiency Dividend/Budget Cuts

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?
- b. If so, where and at what classification?
- c. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
- d. What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

Answer:

- a. No. The ACMA's average staffing level for 2010-11 commenced at 597, and concluded at 623. A net increase of 26, partly represented by additional staff required for the Cyber safety and the Digital Switchover programs.
- b. Not applicable
- c. Yes, reductions will be undertaken during 2011-12 to meet future budgetary targets and reductions in NPP funding. The level of staffing target will be determined, based on a range of factors, for example, the future enterprise agreement, skill levels required for particular activities, changes in organisational priorities, and government requirements. Overall budgetary management is achieved through a range of activities not limited to, recruitment, transfers, retirements, attrition, technological improvements, business process improvements, structural changes, improved procurement and contract management in addition to knowledge and skill advances.
- d. No changes are planned.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 284

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hospitality and Entertainment

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What is the agency's hospitality spend FYTD?
- b. Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- c. What is the agency's entertainment spend FYTD?
- d. Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

Answer:

- a. The ACMA's hospitality spend FYTD is \$1,838.94
- b. Please see table below
- c. The ACMA's entertainment spend FYTD is \$9,377.54
- d. Please see table below

Hospitality	Location	Date	Purpose	Cost
Industry Functions (8)	ABC (Sydney)	4/04/2011	Meeting	146.22
	Media Communications (Sydney)	9/05/2011	Meeting	164.91
	Alcatel-Lucent (Sydney)	30/06/2010	Meeting	218.73
	IBM (Canberra)	12/08/2010	Meeting	118.18
	Australian Mobile and Telecommunications Authority (Canberra)	19/07/2010	Meeting	63.91
	Classifications Board (Sydney)	2/07/2010	Meeting	137.45
	Children Television Classification Forum (Sydney)	24/06/2010	Forum	363.18
	Regional Qld Retransmission (Canberra)	11/08/2010	Meeting	626.36
	Sub Total			1,838.94
	Entertainment	Location	Date	Purpose
Chairman / Authority Functions (6)	ACMA (Melbourne)	11/08/2010	Creating Knowledge Presentation	136.73
	ACMA (Canb/Syd/Melb)	2/07/2010	Recognition of 5th anniversary of establishment of Agency	7,550.00
	ACMA (Canb)	24/05/2011	Recognition and appreciation of long service and retirement from the Authority of Member R Shogren	104.55
	ACMA(Sydney)	13/12/2010	Annual dinner and appreciation of Authority Members contribution	1337.69
	ACMA (Sydney)	23/06/2010	Recognition and appreciation of long service and retirement from the Authority of Members J Plante & M Long	248.57
	Sub Total			9,377.54
TOTAL				\$ 11,216.48

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 285

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Digital TV and Radio

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. In determining the future spectrum requirements, what assumptions will ACMA make with regard to the future growth of mobile broadband services in Australia?
- b. What impact will technologies such as Long Term Evolution (LTE) be likely to have on improved efficiencies in terms of use of the spectrum available?
- c. Will such efficiency improvements boost the use of wireless services and decrease the reliance on fixed line broadband services (such as the NBN roll-out)?

Answer:

- a. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) assumptions on the future growth of mobile broadband services in Australia are based on reports released by the International Telecommunications Union on the requirements for spectrum to support mobile broadband (*ITU-R Report M.2078*) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Internet Activity Survey (ABS 8153)*. Our assumptions are based on the likely improvements in technology and coding efficiencies, an increase in the density of infrastructure deployment and a fixed-to-mobile convergence whereby data from the mobile network is offloaded to 'WiFi' like cells connected to fixed line broadband services. The ACMA has recently released a discussion paper addressing these issues called *Towards 2020—Future spectrum requirements for mobile broadband* available from the ACMA website.
- b. Technologies such as Long Term Evolution can offer improved spectral efficiencies over existing technologies through improvements in technology and coding efficiencies. The exact spectral efficiency to be gained is dependent on such things as individual deployment scenario, the amount of aggregated spectrum available and the frequency of operation.
- c. The ACMA's report titled *Australia in the digital economy: The shift to the online environment* considers that the increasing capacity of mobile networks and devices to support triple play services such as voice, data and video is changing the dynamics of internet use by increased flexibility of access. While the use of mobile services is increasing they should be viewed as complementary to fixed line broadband services as each is suitable for different circumstances with each having their relative merits addressing different user requirements. The main differentiators between fixed line and wireless broadband platforms are the bandwidth and mobility that can be provided to the end users. A fixed line network would be capable of delivering very high data rates or bandwidth intensive services while wireless can provide high mobility but at potentially lower data rates depending on network loads.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 286

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing – Digital TV & Radio (ACMA Staff Employment)

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many staff are now employed at ACMA?
- b. How many staff were employed at ACMA when it was established in 2005?
- c. What is the basis for this significant increase in staff numbers?
- d. What is the corresponding increase in the salary and wages costs as a result?

Answer:

- a. The number of staff employed by the ACMA staff at 16th June 2011, was 630 full time equivalents
- b. The number of staff employed by the ACMA on 1st July 2005 was 504 full time equivalents.
- c. The increase in staff is reflective of staffing levels that were lower than budget when the ACMA was created from the merger of the Australian Communications Authority and the Australian Broadcasting Authority and additional funding associated with new policy proposals and other government activities.
- d. The corresponding increase in salary and wages is \$27.019 million, which comprises of new NPPs that raised the number of ACMA employees, therefore, increasing the salary cost, salary increments and pay rises are the other contributing factors.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 287

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Digital TV & Radio

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Can ACMA help households in SE South Australia, which had the analog signal switched off in December 2010, who are having difficulty accessing the digital terrestrial signal and whose TV services are worse than those received under the former analog service?
- b. If so, how?

Answer:

All Australians in areas where analog TV has been switched off are entitled to receive the full range of free to air TV channels and multichannels available in Australia's largest cities, provided they have appropriate reception equipment. Viewers who are experiencing reception difficulties can obtain advice on how to improve their reception from the Digital Switchover Taskforce (DST) within the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. Those viewers who cannot obtain terrestrial digital television can apply for access to Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) satellite service.

Reception difficulties of individual viewers

Reception difficulties are often the result of a weak signal. In some cases, an endorsed antenna installer may advise on ways of improving reception, even in areas with marginal signal coverage. Some antenna installers have been endorsed by the Australian Government under the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme. Viewers can use mySwitch website <http://www.digitalready.gov.au/MySwitch.aspx> to find their nearest endorsed antenna installer. *mySwitch* is a web-based tool which has been developed by the Digital Switchover Taskforce to provide the most up-to-date information about local terrestrial and satellite television services, the frequencies they are transmitted on, the expected coverage of the transmitter serving local areas and VAST service eligibility.

Viewers should check *mySwitch* to see whether digital television signals are available in their area, and whether coverage from the transmitter site is adequate. Viewers can also contact the DST managed Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13 to obtain more information on what to do if they experience reception difficulties.

VAST Satellite Television

Viewers in remote Australia, as well as viewers who live in regional/metropolitan areas who are unable to receive adequate terrestrial television reception from the transmitters that serve the area in which they live, are able to receive their digital television services through the new Government-funded VAST service.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

The VAST service provides the same number of television channels that are available in capital cities. The VAST service also provides viewers with access to the local regional news services currently broadcast by the commercial broadcasters in their relevant terrestrial licence areas.

To determine eligibility to access the VAST service and to make an application to receive the VAST services, viewers need to go to *mySwitch* website (<http://www.digitalready.gov.au/MySwitch.aspx>). Viewers who wish to apply for the VAST service will be directed from *mySwitch* to a broadcaster-managed application procedure, which they will have to complete.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 288

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: VHF Marine Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

The Authority is reviewing the licencing system for recreational boat owners including VHF radio licence requirements. What is the status of the review, and what budgetary considerations impact on the Authority carrying out any further work on this policy area or review and how?

Answer:

The ACMA commenced a review of marine radio operator qualifications for recreational boaters in 2009 with the establishment of the Marine Radio Operators Working Group and the release of its first discussion paper: *VHF Marine Radio Operator Qualification Arrangements – Non-Commercial (Recreational) Vessels*. Members of the Working Group include the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, State Marine Safety Authorities, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, the Australian Maritime College, the Australian Marine Industries Federation and the Australian Boating College. The ACMA released a second discussion paper – *VHF Marine Radio Operator Qualification Arrangements Recreational (Non-Commercial) Vessels* – in 2010. .

Status of the review

The closing date for submissions in response to the second discussion paper was 28 February 2011. The ACMA convened a meeting of the Marine Radio Operators Working Group in Brisbane on 11 February 2011 to assist its consideration of submissions and proposals. The ACMA continues to work constructively with stakeholders, including Commonwealth and state marine safety agencies, to develop more effective regulatory arrangements for marine radio use by recreational boaters.

Budgetary considerations

The review is being conducted by the ACMA in accordance with its spectrum management responsibilities. The Communications Infrastructure Division has principal responsibility for the spectrum management function within the ACMA and allocates resources to the review as required from its overall budget allocation.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 289

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

1. The ACMA proposes to vary the CB Class Licence to:
 - a. Change the existing UHF CB channel arrangements to include additional channels.
 - b. Relax the duty cycle restriction for telemetry and telecommand transmissions.
 - c. Permit the transmission of position and identification information.
 - d. Improve the regulatory effectiveness of the Class Licence by clarifying the permitted operation on the repeater channels.
 - e. Prohibit the indirect linking of repeater stations.
 - f. Prohibit the linking of CB stations.
2. What additional information can be provided re the above variations and the prohibition of CB stations being linked and the linking of UHF Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS) repeaters?
3. With reference to the issue re “indirect” linking of UHF CBRS repeaters, in what area(s) has this been a problem and how has the Authority responded?

Answer:

2. (Answer to 1.a.) The key driver for including additional channels was to address congestion in the band.
2. (Answer to 1.b.) The duty cycle relaxation for the UHF CB telemetry/telecommand channels has been introduced at the request of users.
2. (Answer to 1.c.) The variation permitting the transmission of position and identification information by means other than speech reflects that the UHF CB equipment standard (AS/NZS 4365/2011 published by Standards Australia Int. Ltd.) already allows for this functionality to be incorporated into CB equipment. The variation allows an accurate position to be automatically transmitted in times of emergency.
2. (Answer to 1.d.) The regulatory effectiveness of the class licence, in respect of minimising interference to stations operation through CB repeater stations, is improved by restricting the use of CB repeater channels for non-repeater operation to areas outside of the operational range of repeater stations.

The use of tones to initiate communications on the CB emergency channels is also precluded in order that emergency transmissions are heard by all stations operating within range of the transmitting station.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

2. (Answer to 1.e.) In order to prevent congestion, a condition of a licence authorising the operation of a CB repeater station generally prohibits the linking of repeater stations. On the understanding that some CB operators in Western Australia were either circumventing this requirement or proposing to circumvent the requirement (the CB class licence was then silent on this issue), the condition was extended to the CB class licence.
2. (Answer to 1.f.) The variation of the class licence prohibits the linking of CB stations in order to minimise the potential for congestion to occur on the channels concerned.
3. See answer to 1.e.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 290

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Has any CB operator been breached under Communication legislation, had their radio equipment confiscated or a monetary fine imposed?

Answer:

In the last 12 months the ACMA identified 29 breaches to the provisions of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* in relation to the UHF Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS). These breaches have related to unlicensed operation of radiocommunications devices (section 46 of the Act), unlawful possession of a radiocommunications device (section 47), contravention of licence conditions (section 113) and/or causing interference with radiocommunications (section 197).

In accordance with the ACMA's principles-based approach to compliance, CBRS operators were issued with advice notices or warning notices for these breaches.

The ACMA has not seized any radiocommunications equipment from or imposed any monetary fines on any CBRS operators in the last twelve months.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 291

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: VHF Marine Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Is the Authority aware of the Seaway Tower on the Gold Coast possibly using high power when transmitting on either VHF Marine 16 or 67 and from this, making it harder for other Marine Base stations to hear traffic directed to these groups?

Answer:

The ACMA has licensed Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport to operate a Maritime Coast station using VHF marine channels from the Seaway Tower at Southport and also via a remotely controlled station at Springbrook QLD.

The ACMA understands that the station at Springbrook in the Gold Coast hinterland is situated some 600 metres above sea level. This elevated site provides coverage greater than that normally achieved by marine coast stations. This coverage may lead some marine users to believe that the station operates at a high power level.

The ACMA has not received any complaints of interference from other operators of Maritime Coast stations in the Gold Coast area that relate to the Southport station. However following an enquiry from a resident of Brisbane in late May, the ACMA has been undertaking some monitoring of VHF marine frequencies in the area. To date, no interference has been noted.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 292

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: VHF Marine Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Has the Authority received any complaints re Marine stations misusing channel 16 by broadcasting weather information or is this permitted even though, procedures show that this should take place on Channel 67?

Answer:

The ACMA received an enquiry from a resident of Brisbane in May 2011 who believed that broadcasts of weather information were being made on VHF marine channel 16 in the Gold Coast area. The ACMA has been monitoring use of VHF marine frequencies in the Gold Coast since May. The ACMA has not observed the transmission of weather broadcasts on channel 16 but has observed the transmission of weather broadcasts on channel 73. The use of channel 73 for weather broadcasts is permitted.

The ACMA has not received any complaints from operators of Maritime Coast stations in the Gold Coast area about weather broadcasts on channel 16.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 293

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: HF/VHF Marine Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

What is the maximum power that base stations within the Volunteer Marine Rescue groups can use within the Marine Service?

Answer:

- a. For the 27 MHz Marine band a maximum transmitter output power of 4 watts pZ (carrier power) or 12 watts pX (peak envelope power) may be used by a Maritime Coast station.
- b. For the VHF Marine band a maximum power of 83 watts EIRP (radiated power) may be used by a Maritime Coast station.
- c. For the HF Marine band a maximum transmitter power of 400 watts pX (peak envelope power) may be used by a Maritime Coast station.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 294

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: VHF Marine Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Can the Authority provide an update re its Review of the Recreational Boating Marine Service (Australia) and whether it is considering extending channels or in the future, “splitting” the existing channels?

Answer:

Review of marine radio operator qualifications for recreational boaters

The ACMA commenced a review of marine radio operator qualifications for recreational boaters in 2009 with the establishment of the Marine Radio Operators Working Group and the release of its first discussion paper: *VHF Marine Radio Operator Qualification Arrangements – Non-Commercial (Recreational) Vessels*. Members of the Working Group include the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, State Marine Safety Authorities, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, the Australian Maritime College, the Australian Marine Industries Federation and the Australian Boating College. The ACMA released a second discussion paper – *VHF Marine Radio Operator Qualification Arrangements Recreational (Non-Commercial) Vessels* – in 2010.

The closing date for submissions in response to the second discussion paper was 28 February 2011. The ACMA convened a meeting of the Marine Radio Operators Working Group in Brisbane on 11 February 2011 to assist its consideration of submissions and proposals. The ACMA continues to work constructively with stakeholders, including Commonwealth and state marine safety agencies, to develop more effective regulatory arrangements for marine radio use by recreational boaters.

International arrangements for the VHF Maritime Mobile Band

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialised agency of the United Nations, is convening a World Radiocommunication Conference in early 2012 (WRC-12). WRC-12 will consider a number of proposals in relation to the VHF Maritime Mobile band. Those proposals include re-allocating a segment of the band for data purposes and splitting a number of two-frequency channels in order to provide more single-frequency channels. The outcomes of WRC-12 are expected to impact on frequency allocations for all maritime sectors, including the recreational boating community, but this is expected to occur some years after WRC-12 rather than in 2012.

The ACMA has undertaken a preliminary assessment of the possible outcomes from WRC-12 and is consulting with stakeholders as part of its preparations for that conference. The ACMA does not propose to consult publicly about future arrangements for VHF Maritime Mobile allocations in Australia until after WRC-12.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 295

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: HF/VHF Marine and UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Can or does ACMA ensure that the marine channels and both Channels 5/35 UHF CB classed as Emergency Channels are free of non-emergency traffic?
- b. How is this achieved?

Answer:

- a. VHF marine radio channels 16 and 67 are allocated for distress, safety and calling purposes. UHF CB channels 5 and 35 are allocated for calling and emergency purposes. The planning and licensing arrangements established by the ACMA for the VHF maritime mobile band and the UHF CB band are intended to meet the requirements of marine radio and CB users for emergency/distress/safety channels. The arrangements are not intended to keep the channels free of non-emergency traffic.

- b. 1) VHF marine radio

The ACMA has commenced an information campaign aimed at informing boaters of the correct channels to use and how to use them. The ACMA has produced postcards for point of sale use as well as stickers and is making the VHF marine handbook available for free download. Limited hard copies of the handbook are also being given away at boat shows. The ACMA has also commenced using social media (Facebook and Twitter) to communicate key messages about the correct use of radio channels.

Media alerts have been sent to all coastal newspapers and information has been distributed to two publishing companies for the development of articles in their respective fishing and boating magazines.

ACMA staff have also been interviewed by the ABC about this issue.

- b. 2) Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS)

The ACMA's regulatory activities have aimed to minimise congestion to both channels 5 and 35 from non-emergency traffic through a combination of reactive risk based approaches to individual cases of unlicensed operation and interference and proactive measures through community education. The ACMA has delivered on-air announcements educating users about the appropriate use of channels 5 and 35 and engaged the co-operation of community organisations to assist in the dissemination of this information to the CBRS community.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 296

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: HF/VHF Marine and UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Has the Authority's management of these two services had any negative consequences?

Answer:

The ACMA is not aware of any negative consequences of its management of either the Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS) or the Maritime Mobile Service. The ACMA responds to complaints of interference to or inappropriate use of either service in accordance with its principles-based approach to compliance.

Maritime Mobile Service

For example, the ACMA is monitoring use of VHF marine channels in Port Phillip Bay in Victoria. Congestion in Port Phillip Bay was reported to the ACMA by the Marine Radio Operators Working Group that was established to assist with the review of marine radio operator qualifications for recreational boaters. Monitoring commenced in June 2011 and is expected to continue in Port Phillip Bay and other high traffic areas of Australia until the end of the year. This extended period of monitoring will allow the ACMA to gather evidence about use of marine channels in these areas and determine if congestion is occurring and, if it is, the reason or reasons for that congestion.

UHF Citizens Band Radio Service

In the last 12 months the ACMA identified 29 breaches to the provisions of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* in relation to the UHF Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS). These breaches have related to unlicensed operation of radiocommunications devices (section 46 of the Act), unlawful possession of a radiocommunications device (section 47), contravention of licence conditions (section 113) and/or causing interference with radiocommunications (section 197).

In accordance with the ACMA's principles-based approach to compliance, CBRS operators were issued with advice notices or warning notices for these breaches.

The ACMA has not seized any radiocommunications equipment from or imposed any monetary fines on any CBRS operators in the last twelve months.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 297

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: HF/VHF Marine Radio and UHF CB Radio

Senator Fisher asked:

Why must ACMA require a complaint to be lodged before acting?

Answer:

The ACMA has adopted a principles-based approach to compliance that allows it to take a risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement. In an emergency or where there is a risk to safety of life communications services, the ACMA may take action without requiring a written complaint. However, to ensure that it is effectively using its resources in the management of the radiofrequency spectrum, the ACMA normally requires complaints of interference to be made in writing and to include an appropriate degree of supporting information (for example, the geographic location at which the interference was observed, the frequency or channel affected, the date and time of the interference, technical characteristics of the interfering signal and any other relevant information).

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 298

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: VHF Marine and UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Why has a Radio Class licencing system been introduced?
- b. Does it impact on revenue collected by licence fees?

Answer:

- a & b. Class licences were introduced by the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* to provide an effective form of licensing for radiocommunications devices that cannot be practicably licensed by apparatus or spectrum licences.

The ACMA typically uses class licences to authorise the operation of radiocommunications devices that employ a limited set of common frequencies and comply with a common set of conditions. This type of licensing involves minimum licence administration by the ACMA. A class licence sets out the conditions under which any person is permitted to operate. It is not issued to an individual user. The reasons for introducing a class licence include:

- the devices needing to be authorised are ubiquitous, it is impractical to licence the devices individually or they are generally low or very low power and will not cause interference to other services. Examples of such devices are CB radios, garage door openers, home computer wireless networks, mobile phones and radio controlled models; or
- the devices needing to be authorised are used for communications in emergencies. In this instance having the devices licensed under a class licence encourages the ownership of the devices. An example of such devices is the emergency locating devices used by mariners and bushwalkers.
- the use of class licences reduces the regulatory and licensing effort required to support the operation of these services. This is consistent with the current graduated approach to radiocommunications regulation.¹

The operation of radiocommunications devices under a class licence does not require the payment of any licence fees to the ACMA. As class licences are typically used when it would be inefficient, impractical or administratively burdensome to authorise the operation of devices through apparatus or spectrum licences, the ACMA does not believe that the use of class licensing has any material impact on revenue collected from radiocommunications licences.

¹ Adapted from SMA Annual Report 1996-97 Page 32.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 299

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Please update progress in restructuring the UHF 400-502 MHz UHF waveband and the operation of the UHF CB Service?

Answer:

The ACMA released a new 400 MHz Plan on 21 February 2011, detailing the new channelling arrangements and transition timeframes in the 403-430 and 450-520 MHz bands.

The amended class licence for UHF Citizen Band use, detailing the new channelling arrangements, came into effect on 27 May 2011. A new equipment standard supporting the new UHF Citizen Band channelling arrangements also came into effect on 27 May 2011.

Details on the new 400 MHz Plan, Citizen Band class licence and equipment standard are available on the ACMA website.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 300

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Can ACMA explain the basis for its support to “split” the existing 40 channels CBRS in two thus providing to that Service an additional 40 channels?
- b. What are the implications of extending the Service’s allocation of band instead of “splitting” the existing channels?

Answer:

- a. The ACMA undertook to expand the number of channels available in the UHF Citizen Band in response to congestion in the band in urban areas and in line with an overall strategy throughout the broader 400 MHz spectrum to reduce transmission bandwidth from 25 kHz to 12.5 kHz. The key objective of this change was to make more channels available thus relieving congestion and increasing the utility of the band.
- b. If the amount of spectrum used for the UHF Citizen Band was to be increased instead of splitting the existing channels, any additional spectrum would need to be taken away from other users in the 400 MHz band, e.g. land mobile service users such as taxi companies, electricity gas and water utilities, etc. Any change to significantly increase the amount of spectrum used for the UHF Citizen Band would also have consequential effects on the way that much of the broader 400 MHz band is structured. This would mean that thousands of existing land mobile users in the band would need to re-tune equipment or purchase new equipment at base stations and within their fleets of vehicles.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 301

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

With a major restructuring of the entire UHF Waveband now proceeding has ACMA received any complaints from users across the UHF band that they have to move or are being forced to modify or purchase new radio equipment?

Answer:

Since the review phase of the 400 MHz review concluded on 23 December 2010 the ACMA has not received any formal complaints from users of the 400 MHz band concerning any impost caused by the outcomes of the 400 MHz review.

During the course of the review, the ACMA responded to several representations made to Members of Parliament. Those representations were mainly about changes to the UHF Citizen Band Radio Service.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearing June 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 302

Program No: ACMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: UHF CB Radio Services

Senator Fisher asked:

Under the Budget allocation of monies to the ACMA, is it being restricted from doing more to promote changes to the operation of the UHF section within the CBRS?

Answer:

The ACMA's promotion of the changes is not being restricted by its budget allocation.

The ACMA will continue promoting the changes through a range of media including media releases, web announcements and the use of social media where appropriate.