

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ: 23

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020

Topic: Correspondence between department and Fox Sports

Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 34

Senator KRISTINA KENEALLY asked:

Senator KENEALLY: So was the department of communications consulted on this announcement before it was made?

Mr Atkinson: The decision to do this would have been done through the normal ERC processes and we would have in the normal budget processes of policy development, costing and those things.

Senator KENEALLY: Sorry, but that is conditional language—it would have been. Do you know? Is that how it was done?

Mr Atkinson: I'm relatively certain, yes.

Senator KENEALLY: Is there not anyone there in that vast army of officials with you who can confirm that?

Mr Atkinson: Sorry, over the last few months we've had many, many, many considerations through cabinet and ERC processes. All of these would go through government decision-making processes and, yes, it went through the normal processes. I will say yes. I don't have a brief on this specifically, because—

Senator KENEALLY: You will forgive me for taking that with a grain of salt because, for example, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation money did not go through what we might consider normal processes, so I'm trying to understand. Let me ask this: has there been correspondence between the department of communications and Fox Sports on this matter either before or after the minister's announcement?

Mr Windeyer: I would have to take that on notice. Not that I can recall, but I would have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: So there was nothing to say you might be getting an extension to your contract, no communication?

Mr Windeyer: I'm sure there has been communication with Fox Sports or Foxtel following a government decision and announcement. But my interpretation of the question is whether we'd had communications with Foxtel around this measure prior to a government decision—not that I can recall, but I'm happy to take that on notice.

Senator KENEALLY: Given that the government claims this was for women's niche and underrepresented sports, did the minister or the department consult with the Australian Sports Commission or the Office for Sport Officials on this announcement?

Mr Atkinson: I would have to take that on notice. It's an extension of the existing program, where the parameters were set, so those entities have been part of this program because it's an ongoing program. It is an extension of it, so we'd have to look back into the original design of it.

Answer:

- 1. Was the Department of Communications consulted on this announcement before it was made?**

Yes.

- 2. Has there been correspondence between the Department of Communications and Fox Sports on this matter either before or after the minister's announcement?**

The department communicated with Fox Sports both before and after Minister Fletcher and Minister Colbeck jointly announced the additional \$10 million funding on 22 July 2020.

- 3. Did the minister or the department consult with the Australian Sports Commission or the Office for Sport Officials on this announcement?**

The department contacted officials at the Department of Health prior to the announcement of the extended grant.

The department also consulted with the Office of Sport (Department of Health) in July 2017 in developing the scope of the initial grant.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ: 24

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020

Topic: Coverage of Women's Sport

Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 35

Senator KRISTINA KENEALLY asked:

Senator KENEALLY: Going back to the \$30 million, just to confirm, that wasn't an open tender either, was it?

Mr Atkinson: I'm relatively certain it was a grant rather than a procurement.

Senator KENEALLY: So it was a grant which was simply just a grant; there weren't particularly guidelines or an invitation for people to apply?

Mr Atkinson: That goes back to the original program. It's a rollover of the original program from, I think, years ago.

Senator KENEALLY: It wasn't that many.

CHAIR: The issue here is the \$10 million extension has been linked to the COVID recovery, which falls under our terms of reference.

Mr Atkinson: It's about the reopening of those sports.

CHAIR: That's why we're interested. We're also interested that \$10 million seems to be being given away without any kind of transparent process that we are aware of.

Senator KENEALLY: So which sports exactly will be supported through the grants of \$10 million?

Mr Windeyer: I think that will be determined in the same way as it was worked out under the previous iteration of the program. We expect the codes that will benefit will include: AFL, soccer, rugby codes, cricket, basketball and hockey.

Senator KENEALLY: Men's or women's?

Mr Windeyer: Women's.

Senator KENEALLY: Right. Can I stop you there and put on the record—you don't need to comment—several of those women's codes used to be on the ABC before its funding was cut in 2014. So those sports used to be broadcast, women's sports, on the ABC. Can we go back to the original \$30 million? What exactly did taxpayers get in return for \$30 million—total number of hours of women's sport, total number of sports supported?

Mr Windeyer: That's detail that we can provide to you on notice. I don't have that information in front of me.

Senator KENEALLY: So the department made a decision to roll over a program—

Mr Atkinson: Sorry, the government made a decision, not us.

Senator KENEALLY: Okay, the government made a decision to roll over a program. What information did they have in front of them that the program was actually useful?

Mr Atkinson: There would have been new policy proposals considered through normal cabinet processes.

Mr Windeyer: We have information about the coverage of women's sport over the previous years, which could have been taken into account, but I don't have that information in front of me.

Senator KENEALLY: I would like to request it on notice then, please—

Mr Windeyer: Certainly.

Answer:

1. What exactly did taxpayers get in return for \$30 million—total number of hours of women's sport, total number of sports supported?

Refer to the answer to IQ20 for details of the types of sports and total number of hours of broadcast under this grant.

2. The government made a decision to roll over a program. What information did they have in front of them that the program was actually useful?

The initial funding of \$30 million was provided to Fox Sports from 2017–18 to 2020–21 to support television and online coverage of sports that receive low or no broadcast exposure under an ad hoc grant. This includes women's sports, niche sports, and emerging sports.

In July this year, the government made a decision to extend the program to 2022 with a further \$10 million in funding.

When announcing its decision, the government acknowledged that Fox Sports is well placed to continue delivering sports broadcasting, as it has been successfully delivering the under-represented sports program since 2017.

Fox Sports has delivered on the grant objective of increasing support for television and online coverage of under-represented sports, including women's sports, niche sports, and emerging sports that exhibit high levels of community involvement and participation. For example, key achievements include:

- increasing the coverage of women's sports by more than 100 per cent since 2016, with more than 3,050 hours broadcast over the last year;
- broadcasting a diverse range of sports that receive little or no free-to-air television coverage including a commitment in 2020-21 to undertake broadcast coverage of 17 women's sport competitions, 12 niche sport competitions and 9 emerging sport competitions;
- over the three-year period 2017-20 supporting, on average, the broadcasting of around 40 sports annually; and
- undertaking a range of initiatives to assist sports beyond just improving their broadcast coverage, including providing media training to players of the Women's National Basketball league and providing a pathway for female golfers to participate in competitions forming part of the Ladies European Tour.

Highlights of Fox Sports performance over previous financial years, together with the details of other initiatives, are outlined in fact-sheets available on the department's website at:

<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/television/broadcast-and-content-reform-package>.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ19

Division: Communications Infrastructure
Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020
Topic: 5G Safety
Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 51

Senator KRISTINA KENEALLY asked:

Senator KENEALLY: I want to follow up on what's been happening since that \$9 million announcement in December to build community confidence in 5G safety. This is, of course, because we've seen rumours and theories across social media, the internet and the community regarding 5G and its relationship to coronavirus—even, I believe, on Four Corners. Can you give us any indication of what the department has done with that money since then in relation to project time frame and outputs, project partners, milestones and progress to date?

Mr Windeyer: I can give you a bit of a summary, but I'm happy to provide a more detailed indication of exactly where things are on notice. The announcement of the funding, in a sense, flows in a number of directions and is associated with a number of agencies, ourselves and ARPANSA probably being the two primary parts of it. It covers things that include some communications and community outreach and support, as well as ongoing funding for research. That is undertaken and looked after through the Department of Health and ARPANSA. The other thing to note is that there were activities associated with electromagnetic emissions and health concerns prior to that \$9 million announcement, and so there has been activity that has continued. The Australian Communications and Media Authority's website has had a number of fact sheets and information added to it in recent times, as has the department's website. Material has been made available from the Department of Health directly on the question of 5G and coronavirus. Looking forward, the department is doing some work to better understand this; doing some research around community attitudes, therefore giving us a basis to see if we can better target and focus the type of information that the community might need to help it understand the situation with respect to 5G and, in a sense, to understand the situation with respect to EME generally. Obviously, as you know, the potential concern is about the emissions and not about the technology, as it were.

Senator KENEALLY: Sure. It might be useful if you take that information you just indicated on notice. I appreciate that.

Mr Windeyer: I'm happy to.

Answer:

The Enhanced Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Program provides \$9 million in funding over 4 years for two streams of activities; research and expert engagement undertaken by Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), and a public communications program delivered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC).

An outline of the funding allocations for the program is below:

\$ millions	FY2019-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23
ARPANSA - Expense		1.1	1.1	1.1
ARPANSA - Capital		2.0		
DITRDC - Expense	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.5

NB: Figures are rounded.

Key activities of ARPANSA since the December 2019 announcement include revision of the EME exposure standard and provision of information to councils regarding the research into EME levels from the frequencies used in telecommunications. ARPANSA has also commenced work on the upgrade to its EME laboratory to extend its capability to higher EME frequencies which are related to 5G and future telecommunications. Future work will include environmental measurement studies and commissioning of research to focus on key research needs that underpin safety standards.

DITRDC received \$102,000 for 2019-20 and used these funds to commission market research on how to improve the communications program. This research will inform the delivery of information on the regulation and safety of EME from telecommunications facilities to the public in a clear and accessible manner. Future communication work includes improving the website, releasing easy to understand fact sheets and clear communication products on EME safety.

DITRDC continues to work with ARPANSA, as well as the industry regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority on the content and delivery of EME safety information.

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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ: 26

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020

Topic: Foxtel Funding

Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 33-34

Senator HANSON-YOUNG asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: I'm just asking from a public policy perspective, could the ABC do with some more funding to broadcast women's sport?

CHAIR: We missed the first bit of your question, Senator Hanson-Young, but I think in essence it was: could the ABC do with more money to broadcast women's sport?

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: That is correct.

Mr Atkinson: It's difficult to answer. It's a question for the ABC because they have their editorial independence and they could choose to broadcast women's sport, so I think that's probably a question for them.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Who suggested or under what guidance was the \$10 million for Foxtel believed to be an important part of COVID recovery? Where did that come from?

Mr Atkinson: All of the decisions in here are decisions of government that were made through the normal ERC processes.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: So was there any advice from the department to the government about the need to give extra money to Foxtel?

Mr Atkinson: Any of the considerations through ERC are where we provide our advice privately to government inside of those processes.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Is there a brief that exists that suggests \$10 million to Foxtel is needed?

Mr Atkinson: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator KENEALLY: I might pick up on this line of questioning regarding Fox Sports. Can you tell us, when was the decision taken, the dates, to award the \$10 million to Fox Sports?

Mr Atkinson: Sorry—

CHAIR: When was the date?

Mr Atkinson: I don't know. I'd have to take that on notice, but it would be through the normal ERC budget processes. Usually, we're not able to reveal the timings of deliberations of various decisions that add up to, effectively, budget decisions, which is what these are.

CHAIR: When did you become aware, Mr Atkinson? That's a different question. When did the department become aware \$10 million would be granted?

Mr Atkinson: I suspect it would have been when the cabinet minute came out that we would be aware there was a decision.

CHAIR: Can you take that on notice? I don't think that is a cabinet matter. The date the department became aware is not part of cabinet considerations.

Mr Atkinson: Unless we became aware through the cabinet process, which we usually do because we provide information into it.

CHAIR: Well, you added that in. We just want the date the department became aware; that's it.

Mr Atkinson: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

1. Is there a brief that exists that suggests \$10 million to Foxtel is needed?

The Department has provided a number of briefs on the under-represented sports grant.

2. When did the Department become aware \$10 million would be granted?

The Department became aware of the decision to award a further \$10 million to Foxtel once the Government made this decision.

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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ: 27

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020

Topic: Grantees of the Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package

Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 49

Senator HANSON-YOUNG asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Are you able to tell us the successful grantees in the Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package?

Mr Windeyer: To the extent that decisions have been made, the recipients that are known. I can get you a list of those.

Answer:

The Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package, announced on 6 May 2017 as part of an integrated package of reforms intended to modernise media regulation, was designed to help small metropolitan and regional publishers adapt to the challenges facing the contemporary media environment, create employment opportunities for cadet journalists and support regional students to study journalism.

The original package, worth \$60.4 million over three years, consisted of three programs:

- The Regional and Small Publishers Cadetship Program (\$8 million over 2018-19-20).
- The Regional Journalism Scholarships Program (\$2.4 million over 2018-19-20).
- The Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund (administered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority) (\$48 million over 2018-19-20-21, plus \$2 million in administrative costs).

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (formerly the Department of Communications and the Arts) was responsible for administering the Cadetships and Scholarships Programs with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) responsible for administering the Innovation Fund.

Successful Grantees - Regional and Small Publishers Cadetships Program

- ACE Radio Broadcasters P/L t/as The Weekly Advertiser
- Adelphi Printing Pty Ltd as Trustee for the Paton Family Trust
- Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd

- Australian Leisure Media
- Balonne Beacon
- Budsoar Pty Ltd T/As Koori Mail
- Bumma Bippera Media Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation
- Business News Australia Pty Ltd
- Chinchilla Newspapers Pty Ltd
- Dalby Newspapers Pty Ltd
- Elliott Consolidated Newspapers Pty Ltd
- Golden Plains Publishing
- Grant Broadcasters Pty Ltd
- Greysen Enterprises Pty Ltd
- Locolee Pty Ltd
- Mail News Group Pty Ltd
- McPherson Newspapers Pty Ltd
- Mildura Weekly Pty Ltd
- Monaro Media Group Pty Ltd
- Narrandera Argus
- NBN Pty Ltd.
- North East Media Pty Ltd
- Papers & Publications Pty Ltd
- Poet Press
- Private Media Pty Ltd
- Roma Western Star News
- Solstice Media Pty Ltd
- Southern Cross Austereo Pty Ltd
- Stadtic Media Pty Ltd Trading as Twin Town Times
- Star News Group Pty Ltd
- Sunraysia Publishing Company Pty Ltd
- Surf Coast News Australia Pty Ltd
- The Express Newspaper
- The North Central Review Pty Ltd
- The North Western Courier Pty Ltd
- The Western Times
- Village News Publishing Pty Ltd
- W&Phillips Pty Ltd T/A Flow FM & Flow Media
- Western Sydney Publishing Group
- Wilkie Watson Publications
- Yarrowonga Chronicle and Corowa Free Press Pty Ltd

Further information on the Regional & Small Publishers Cadetships Program can be found on the Department's website at www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/television/regional-and-small-publishers-jobs-and-innovation-package.

Successful Grantees - Regional Journalism Scholarships Program

- Bond University
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Sturt University
- Curtin University
- Deakin University
- Griffith University
- La Trobe University

- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- RMIT University
- The University of Queensland
- University of Canberra
- University of Melbourne
- University of South Australia
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Wollongong

Further information on the Regional Journalism Scholarships Program can be found on the Department's website at www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/television/regional-and-small-publishers-jobs-and-innovation-package.

Successful Grantees - Regional Innovation Fund

Regional Innovation Fund Round One 2018

1. ACE Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd T/As The Weekly Advertiser
2. Adelphi Printing Pty Ltd as Tee for The Paton Family Trust
3. Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd
4. Central West Media Pty Ltd
5. Elliott Newspaper Group Pty Ltd
6. Jinki Sixteen Pty Ltd atf Numurkah Leader Unit Trust
7. Leader Newspapers Pty Ltd
8. McPherson Newspapers Proprietary Limited T/As McPherson Media Group
9. Mildura Weekly Pty Ltd
10. Nascon Media Pty Ltd
11. North East Media Pty Ltd
12. Private Media Operations Pty Ltd / Crikey
13. Private Media Operations Pty Ltd / Mandarin Solstice Media Pty Ltd
14. Solstice Media Pty Ltd
15. Star News Group Pty Ltd
16. Stormvale Pty Ltd as Tee for The Creighton Family Trust T/As Boonah Newspaper Co
17. Surf Coast News Australia Pty Ltd
18. The Huon Newspaper Company Pty Ltd
19. The Irish Exile Pty Ltd
20. The North Western Courier Pty Ltd
21. The Saturday Paper Pty Ltd
22. The Trustee for Parkes-Brown Family Trust T/As Glasshouse Coutry & Maleny News
23. Warracknabeal Herald Pty Ltd
24. Warragul Regional Newspapers Pty Ltd
25. Western District Newspapers Pty Ltd
26. Women's Agenda / Agenda Media Pty Ltd

Regional Grant Opportunity 2019

1. Newcastle Newspapers Pty Ltd
2. SCMH Enterprises Pty Ltd atf The Law Family Trust
3. Narrangdera Argus Pty Ltd
4. Warrumbungle Productions Pty Ltd
5. Research for Agriculture
6. Southern Star (NSW) Pty Ltd
7. Myall Coast Communications Pty Ltd

8. King Media Regional Pty Ltd
9. Condobolin Argus Pty Ltd
10. Quirindi Printing & Publishing Pty Ltd
11. Lynwood Press
12. Gilgandra Newspapers Pty Ltd
13. Locolee Pty Ltd T/As Coonamble Times
14. Barham Media Pty Ltd atf Shiloh Media Trust
15. Newstate Media Newcastle Pty Ltd
16. Central Coast Newspapers Pty Ltd
17. Wilkie Watson Publications
18. Greyson Enterprises Pty Ltd
19. Sunraysia Publishing Co Pty Ltd
20. North East Media Pty Ltd
21. Giles Newspapers Pty Ltd
22. The Local Publishing Group Pty Ltd
23. Mildura Weekly Pty Ltd
24. Gippslandia Ltd
25. RFP Enterprises Pty Ltd T/As Bendigo Magazine
26. Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd
27. Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser Pty Ltd
28. Elliott Midland Newspapers Pty Ltd
29. Tarrangower Times Pty Ltd
30. GJ Adams Trust
31. Surf Coast News Australia Pty Ltd
32. Warragul Regional Newspapers Pty Ltd
33. McPherson Newspapers Pty Ltd T/As McPherson Media Group
34. Warracknabeal Herald Pty Ltd
35. Maryborough Regional Newspapers Pty Ltd
36. Moscol Group Pty Ltd
37. James Yeates & Sons Pty Ltd
38. Star News Group Pty Ltd as Tee for Ian Thomas Family Trust
39. Local Media Pty Ltd
40. Buloke Times
41. Elliott Gippsland Newspapers Pty Ltd T/As Latrobe Valley Express Partnership
42. Junkies Magazine Australia Pty Ltd
43. Graziher Publishing Pty Ltd
44. Australian Cybermalls Pty Ltd
45. Spilled Ink Pty Ltd
46. Shore Media
47. Business News Australia Pty Ltd
48. Longreach Printing Company Ltd
49. Portasea Pty Ltd
50. Diamond Valley Enterprises Pty Ltd as Tee for Lomas Family Trust
51. Tropic Group Pty Ltd atf Tropic Trust
52. Southern Cross Austereo Pty Ltd
53. Kvitko Holdings Pty Ltd
54. Cassowary Coast Independent News Pty Ltd
55. Croakey Health Media Ltd
56. Propeller Media Pty Ltd
57. Forth South Publishing Pty Ltd
58. YP Publishers Pty Ltd
59. Papers & Publications Pty Ltd
60. Beaconwood Holdings Pty Ltd
61. Newstate Media Pty Ltd

Regional Innovation Fund 2020 Round

1. Macquarie Publishing
2. Newstate Media Pty Ltd
3. Budsoar Pty Ltd T/As Koori Mail
4. Central Coast Newspapers Pty Ltd
5. Condobolin Argus Pty Ltd
6. Echo Publications Pty Ltd
7. King Media Regional Pty Ltd
8. Modaro Media Group Pty Ltd
9. Narrandera Argus Pty Ltd
10. Newstate Media Newcastle Pty Ltd
11. RenewEconomy Pty Ltd as Tee for Renew Economy Trust
12. Roundox Media Pty Ltd
13. Skymote Pty Ltd as Tee for The Martin Family Trust
14. Warrumbungle Publications Pty Ltd T/As Coonabarabran Times
15. Wavelength Group Pty Ltd
16. Wilkie Watson Publications
17. Word & Pixel Perfection Pty Ltd
18. Word Count Media Pty Ltd
19. Cassowary Coast Independent News Pty Ltd
20. Keskazwin Enterprises Pty Ltd
21. Mac Group Publications
22. OurNews Pty Ltd as Tee for The Rogers Family Trust
23. Somerset Media Pty Ltd
24. The Trustee for Parkes-Brown Family Trust
25. Solstice Media
26. The Royal Institution of Australia Incorporated
27. Meander Valley Connect Inc. T/As Meander Valley Gazette
28. Propeller Media
29. Alexandra Newspapers
30. Elliott Midland Newspapers Pty Ltd
31. GJ Adams Trust
32. Gladdis Enterprises Pty Ltd
33. Inside Story Publishing Pty Ltd
34. Maryborough Regional Newspapers Pty Ltd
35. Ncnews Pty Ltd
36. North Central Review Pty Ltd
37. Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser
38. The Local Publishing Group Pty Ltd
39. Warragul Regional Newspapers Pty Ltd
40. Warrantyte Arts & Education Trust
41. The Chung Wah Association Inc.

Further information on the Regional Innovation Fund can be found on ACMA's website at www.acma.gov.au/regional-and-small-publishers-innovation-fund.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ:28

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 6 August 2020

Topic: Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package

Question Type: Hansard Ref: Page 48

Senator HANSON-YOUNG asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Has some of the money from the Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package been spent?

Mr Windeyer: Off the top of my head, I couldn't tell you precisely when the dollars have gone out the door on that one. I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation Package, originally announced on 6 May 2017 as part of an integrated package of reforms intended to modernise media regulation, was designed to help small metropolitan and regional publishers adapt to the challenges facing the contemporary media environment, create employment opportunities for cadet journalists and support regional students to study journalism.

The original package, worth \$60.4 million over three years, consisted of three programs:

- The Regional and Small Publishers Cadetship Program (\$8 million over 2018/19 to 2019/20).
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The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (formerly the Department of Communications and the Arts) was responsible for administering the Cadetships and Scholarships Programs with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) responsible for administering the Innovation Fund.

Regional and Small Publishers Cadetships Program

On 19 December 2018, the then Minister for Communications, the Hon Mitch Fifield announced funding for 41 organisations to fund 70 cadetships under the Cadetships Program, totalling around \$1.8 million (GST exclusive). This program is still operating and there are remaining payments to be made to grantees. As at 17 August 2020, a total of \$922,017 (GST exclusive) has been spent.

Regional Journalism Scholarships Program

On 19 December 2018, the then Minister for Communications, the Hon Mitch Fifield announced funding for 16 universities to fund 66 scholarships under the Scholarships Program, totalling \$2.3 million (GST exclusive). A total of \$2,291,834 (GST exclusive) has been spent on this program.

Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund (ACMA)

ACMA has awarded almost \$17.5 million to more than 130 projects under the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund. As at 17 August 2020, it has paid almost \$8 million (out of total commitments of more than \$12 million) to grant recipients under the two earlier rounds of the Fund.

ACMA is currently in negotiations with successful applicants of the Fund's latest round which allocated almost \$5 million to 41 projects. ACMA expects all remaining committed funds to be paid to recipients under all rounds of the Fund by the end of 2020-21.