

Agency name: Australian Communication and Media Authority

Hansard Ref: Page 22

Topic: Cost of the spectrum review and reform process to the department and ACMA in terms of time and resources

Senator Nita Green asked:

Question:

Senator GREEN: Okay. I've got some questions that, if necessary, I'm happy for the department to take on notice, but I'll just put them to you now. What has been the cost of the spectrum review and reform process to the department and ACMA in terms of time and resources?

[...]

Senator GREEN: Okay. If you could provide a table of that information to the committee, that would be helpful. If you could include as part of those calculations not just staff but also the use of consultants, research, consultation meetings, travel, drafting of submissions and economic modelling, that would be helpful, and I'm sure the committee will forward that to you after the hearing. On that, how many consultations were conducted? Can you provide the committee with the dates and what entities were involved in those consultations as well?

Answer:

- The ACMA's resources to undertake work associated with spectrum management reform have varied over time, depending on priorities, and have been managed from within existing resources.
- Table 1 provides a resource summary of staff, consultants, consultations and travel. The ACMA has not undertaken any economic modelling.

Staffing

- Following the Spectrum Review in 2015 through to 2019, the ACMA had between 4.8 and 10 ASL (within a branch of 18 staff) directly involved in spectrum reform activities.
- Since the move to a staged reform approach in 2019, the ACMA has had 2.8 staff working on spectrum reform advice to the Department and progressing the ACMA's work on the Implementation of the Spectrum Pricing Review.
- The ACMA expects to allocate additional staff to the implementation of spectrum reform, if the current bill is passed by the Parliament.

Consultants

- Analysys Mason was engaged to conduct a research study on spectrum management mechanisms that would 'inform the ACMA's implementation of regulatory policy as specified by the Spectrum Review. The research was [published](#) in June 2017.
- In May 2017, Ariel Bright Consulting Pty Ltd was engaged to develop the benefits management strategy, benefits map, benefits profiles, and benefits realisation for the ACMA's Spectrum Review Implementation Program.
- In 2019, Plum Consulting conducted a research study to examine the international practices on the award of high-value spectrum, particularly for mobile use.

Consultations

- In May 2017 the ACMA released 5 papers in support of the Department’s consultation on [New Spectrum Legislation](#). The papers were intended to provide stakeholders with a greater understanding of how the ACMA envisaged key aspects of the 2017 Bill would operate if it were enacted. The ACMA did not formally consult on the papers and any stakeholder feedback on the papers was provided as part of the Department’s broader consultation rather than directly to the ACMA. The papers focused on:
 1. Accreditation
 2. Annual work program
 3. Equipment rules
 4. Interference management
 5. The Licensing system
- In March 2020 ACMA released a consultation on the [implementation of the Spectrum Pricing Review](#) and received 27 submissions from licensees and interested parties. The consultation focused on the implementation of 3 of the 11 recommendations of the Spectrum Pricing Review.

Table 1: ACMA resources for Spectrum reform processes

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (to date)
Staff	4.8	6.3	10	10	2.8	2.8
Consultants (\$)	-	\$177,670	-	\$59,520	-	
Travel (\$)			\$6,428	\$2,011	\$1,485	
Consultation papers (#)	-	5	-	-	1	