

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Question No: 41**

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**Hansard Ref: Page 63, 9/02/2016**

**Topic: Regional broadcasters and the ABC**

**Senator McKenzie, Bridget asked:**

**Senator McKenzie:** Do you understand that there are concerns amongst regional broadcasters, given that it almost looks like the ABC is getting a free ride into these communities?

**Mr Pendleton:** We are concerned as well, given that these black spots should have been VAST infills, in which case all the broadcasters would have received the same coverage within these areas. With the agreement to allow RBAH to put re-transmitters into these locations, so long as we are all in the same location we do not disagree with it.

**Senator McKenzie:** On notice, that \$1.2 million request by RBAH, could you let us know what discussions have been had within the organisation about whether you are going to pay for that?

**Mr Pendleton:** We have written to the department about it, Senator.

**Answer:**

The ABC does not have any agreements with Regional Broadcasting Australia Holdings (RBAH). The agreements for retransmission and black spot in-fills did not and do not involve the ABC.

The ABC understands that prior to digital television switchover, the Department of Communications negotiated black spots arrangements directly with RBAH and their commercial TV owners. As such, the ABC does not believe it has any liability to fund these services. The ABC was not party to these negotiations or any subsequent agreements. Any concerns related to these arrangements should be raised with the Department and RBAH.