

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency

Question No: 440

Program No. TUSMA

Hansard Ref: Page 31 (29/5/2014)

Topic: Contracts

Senator URQUHART asked:

Senator URQUHART: When was the contract for untimed calls in the extended zone entered into? How long does that have to run?

Mr Wiegold: For this financial year, again, it was entered into in June 2013. That runs for only one year. We are currently in the process of negotiating the contract for next financial year.

Senator URQUHART: Is that financial year to financial year? Is that how that effectively works?

Mr Wiegold: That is correct.

Senator URQUHART: When were the contracts for the emergency call service entered into? How long do they have to run?

Mr Wiegold: I cannot recall exactly when the emergency call service contract was entered into.

Senator URQUHART: If you would like to take that part on notice, that would be great. How long ago and how long does it have to run?

Mr Wiegold: I will take that part on notice. There is a tender until 2016, so that is when that contract will be considered.

Senator URQUHART: So does it end in 2016, or is that when you enter into new tenders?

Mr Wiegold: When we have to negotiate a new one.

Answer:

TUSMA has administered the Emergency Call Service (ECS) contract since its inception on 1 July 2012. The ECS contract is part of the TUSMA Agreement which was agreed and signed before TUSMA was established. The ECS contract also represents a continuation of earlier an arrangement for the provision of the emergency call service.

The tender for the ECS has a deadline to be issued by 23 June 2016. Telstra will continue to effectively provide the ECS during the period after 23 June when tender submissions are considered; the ECS must continue to function at all times and Telstra will continue in its contractual responsibilities after 23 June 2016. This is until a successful tender applicant is chosen and responsibilities are fully transferred to them (or remain with Telstra should Telstra be the successful tender applicant) without disruption to the provision of the ECS. To avoid confusion, Telstra remains the default ECS provider in the event no tender bid is made or TUSMA judges the bids that were made to be unacceptable.