

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 287

Department of Communications and the Arts

Hansard Ref: Page 12, 15/06/2017

Topic: Mobile Black spot Program database – Round 3 locations

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: Mr Paterson at the time described this approach as a 'fundamental change to the program', that there were 'coverage issues' and that some of the locations might have 'a congestion issue'. What is the difference between a location where there is a congestion issue and one with no coverage at all? Can you explain that to me. Is Mr Drew going to do that?

Mr Drew: Each of the priority locations has been identified based on feedback from the public where they have identified an issue in that spot. The coverage issue will depend on the location and the geography. In some cases it will be that there is entirely no coverage. In other cases it may be that there is insufficient capacity on the tower for the region that may cause issues, and there can be other very specific geographic issues that affect the coverage in that area.

Senator URQUHART: So are all of the round 3 locations on the department's mobile black spot database?

Mr Drew: The majority of the locations are on the mobile black spot database. I do not have the specific number, but the vast majority are. There are a small number that are not but are very, very close to other black spots.

Senator URQUHART: But not all of them are on the database?

Mr Drew: A very small number are not.

Senator URQUHART: Have you checked that the majority of them are on the database?

Mr Drew: Yes. I am sorry; I do not actually have the specific number, but I believe it would be in the order of five or 10—

Senator URQUHART: Are you able to provide that to us on notice?

Mr Drew: Yes. Absolutely, on notice.

Answer:

Of the 125 priority locations, 116 are on the mobile black spot database which consists of black spot locations reported to the Department of Communications and the Arts. This database, which was used under rounds 1 and 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Program, was closed on 15 January 2016.