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Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

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Question No: 14

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 109, 18/10/2016

Topic: Decision date – final Guidelines - MBSP

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: That is fine. I mean it is a government program and a government decision. When was that decision about the final guidelines made for the round 1? What year are we talking about?
Mr Robinson: We will take that on notice.
Senator DASTYARI: What year are we talking about here? You surely must know. It will be in the ANAO report. I will just read it again. I can find it in five minutes.
Mr Paterson: What year are we in now—2016. It would have been late 2014, I would expect.
Senator DASTYARI: So 2014 you suspect—maybe 2015.
Mr Paterson: From memory, I think it was around December 2014. So who would have been the minister?
Mr Robinson: It was Minister Turnbull that signed this.
Senator DASTYARI: It is very clear that you were trying to avoid saying that! So the final guidelines were made by Minister Turnbull, is that correct?
Mr Robinson: Yes, but—
Senator DASTYARI: That was in his capacity as communications minister as the predecessor to Senator Fifield.
Mr Paterson: But guidelines for programs of this nature go through an approval process through government, so there is more than one minister who signs off most matters.
Senator DASTYARI: Sure, but the minister at the time in 2014, perhaps 2015—we will work out the exact date; you can take that on notice—was then Minister Turnbull who set the round 1guidelines. Is that correct?

Answer:

The guidelines for round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Program were approved on
27 November 2014 and released publicly on 8 December 2014.

The guidelines for rounds 1 and 2 of the program are available on the Department of Communications and the Arts' website at www.communications.gov.au/mobile_coverage