

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 140**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Has DBCDE commissioned an independent review of the Mildura program? Has this been received? Has this been publicly released? Why not? When will it be released?

**Answer:**

The Department has commissioned and received an independent review of the rollout of the scheme in Mildura. The Department is consulting relevant stakeholders prior to its release.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 141**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

What safety checks have been conducted on set top boxes installed in Regional Victoria and South Australia? What faults/errors/complaints were found?

**Answer:**

Set-top boxes (STBs) procured under the Household Assistance Scheme must meet Australian standards, in particular AS4933 *Digital Television requirements for Receivers*. The contractor must provide a certificate of compliance with AS4933 in their tender response. All STBs provided under the Scheme are also required to comply with the relevant electrical safety standards.

It is a requirement of Service Contractors under the Deed of Agreement that they must undertake continuous quality assurance, including quality control audits on not less than 5 per cent of all services. The Department is also introducing independent technical inspections of a random sample of installations to check that installations have been carried out safely and in accordance with industry standards.

Reporting provided to the Department by HAS Service Contractors, indicates that the most commonly-identified quality assurance issues include:

- No Free-to-air sticker placed on the wall plate at the time of external antenna installation;
- Marginal signal levels requiring the installation of an external antenna;
- Additional customer education considered necessary;
- Antenna adjustments required;
- Incorrect wall plate installed, resulting in an unfavourable aesthetic;
- No weather boot or amalgam tape on the external connectors, which may result in premature corrosion of the connector;
- New connectors terminated incorrectly, resulting in degradation of signal quality.

It should be noted that the above issues have been reported for a very small number of installations.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 142**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Does the department agree with electrical bodies such as Master Electricians Australia that this scheme could turn deadly due to lack of training standards? What training standards exist? How are they enforced? What risk assessment has been conducted?

**Answer:**

The Department does not agree with the statements made by Master Electrician's Australia. There are extensive requirements imposed on contractors under the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS) with which they must comply. It is a mandatory requirement under the HAS that all installers contracted under the HAS be endorsed under the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) or have successfully completed certain units of competency with a Registered Training Organisation. This is a clear undertaking required of the head contractors during the tender process and under the terms of their contract.

Service contractors are required to have policies and procedures in place in relation to occupational health and safety (OH&S); training, awareness and competence; risk management, incident management, specific safety issues, electrical safety, unsafe premises, and working in restricted (roof and floor) spaces and on roofs.

All installers and contractors must undertake the nationally recognised training for:

- i. Applying OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry (CPCCOHS2001A).
- ii. Work safely in the construction industry (CPCCOHS1001A).
- iii. Work safely at heights (CPCCCM1006A).

The Department undertakes random sampling of subcontractor accreditation documentation, including:

- i. A signed Confidentiality and Privacy Deed;
- ii. AIES approval, including the level of endorsement, expiry date and endorsement number; and
- iii. Evidence that training has been passed and completed, including OH&S.

An independent risk assessment of OH&S issues under HAS was undertaken in 2010. This assessment was in addition to the Departments own continuous internal risk assessment of the HAS, which is regularly reviewed and assessed.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 143**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

We note, under the “digital ready” registration process that the applicant is required to have a referee vouch for the applicant’s 12 months work experience in installing antennas and equipment for digital television reception. What checks will be run on the referee’s credentials?

**Answer:**

The question appears to be confusing two different programs - the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) and the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS).

Under the AIES, installers can apply to the Department for endorsement under the Scheme. Along with other requirements, a referee is required. The referee is required to be an independent industry referee who can vouch for the applicant’s length of experience in installing antennas and equipment for digital television reception.

A telephone reference check is conducted for each installer. Referees must establish the nature of their business and relationship with the installer. Endorsement under the AIES does not guarantee that the installer will be engaged to deliver the HAS.

Under the HAS, the head contractor is required to meet substantial obligations under contract to the Department. The contract also requires that these obligations extend to all sub-contractors engaged by the head contractors. The head contractor is responsible for ensuring that all its sub-contractors are adequately skilled and experienced to deliver the requirements of the program.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 144**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Do all employees of registered installers have to satisfy the prerequisites of registration, including passing the online assessment test at the digital ready website? If not, what is preventing unregistered employees from undertaking the installation process on site?

**Answer:**

The Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) is a voluntary scheme for anyone wishing to work in the wider community to install digital equipment. All AIES installers are issued with a badge with their name, unique identification number and photo. This identification is available only to individual installers who are endorsed under AIES. It is not available to all employees of a participating business.

Household Assistance Scheme (HAS) installers must be employed by one of the major companies contracted to provide services under the Scheme. It is a mandatory requirement under the HAS that all service provider personnel and subcontractors installing equipment at customers' premises either be endorsed under the AIES or have successfully complete certain units of competency with a Registered Training Organisation. This is a clear undertaking made by the head contractors during the tender process and under the terms of their contract. The Department undertakes random sampling of sub-contractor accreditation documentation to ensure that all installers doing work meet the HAS requirements.

In addition to these requirements and other training standards, detailed in the response to Question on Notice 142, every installer under the HAS must undertake a police check.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings June 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 145**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Under the online assessment process, is it correct that the individual applicant only needs to complete the online test rather than actually passing the required units of competency from Certificates I & II in Telecommunications Digital Reception Technology through a registered training organisation?

**Answer:**

The Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) online assessment has not been, nor is it intended to be, a substitute for nationally recognised qualifications. The online assessment is a test of an installer's knowledge against industry agreed minimum standards based on 10 units of competency from ICT02 Certificates II and III in Telecommunications DRT, which specifically deal with digital TV and antenna installation.

While nationally recognised qualifications in Certificates II and III in Telecommunications DRT are available, they are not yet mandated fully by industry. Industry and the Taskforce acknowledge it will take time for any appreciable growth in installers who have nationally recognised qualifications.

Completing the online assessment process alone does not qualify an individual to conduct installations under the Household Assistance Scheme. Services under the scheme are provided by established companies contracted to the government. These service contractors are required under their contract with the department to meet training standards for all of their installers, as detailed in the response to Question on Notice 142.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 146**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

To what extent will the HAS be audited to ensure that the taxpayer is getting value for money? Against what will the results be benchmarked? How many installers (% wise) will be audited?

**Answer:**

The Department commissioned an independent evaluation of the rollouts in the Mildura and regional South Australia switchover areas which includes assessing value for money of the scheme. Further evaluations will be undertaken following each rollout.

The evaluation of the pilot in the Mildura switchover area has been used to establish the baseline for subsequent evaluations.

Aspects of the program also have been evaluated under the Internal Audit Plan overseen by the Department's Audit Committee.

Separate to this process:

- Centrelink undertakes a customer satisfaction phone survey of at least 5 per cent of people who have received a HAS installation; and
- service contractors undertake a quality assurance audit on 5 per cent of installations; and
- the Department will undertake an independent quality assurance process.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 147**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

How will the provision of set top boxes be monitored to ensure that persons who already have a perfectly functioning box and antenna system will not be provided with an additional set top box?

**Answer:**

Customers of the Scheme are required to attest that they do not currently have access to all standard definition digital TV channels broadcast in their TV licence area at the time that they opt in with Centrelink and when the service contractor calls to arrange the installation appointment. Furthermore, installers are instructed not to provide a service where the installer finds that a customer already has such access. Such cases are then reported to the Department and Centrelink.



**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 148**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Will installers have a random sample of their installations audited by an independent party prior to receiving payment for services from the Department? (We note that the Digital Switchover Taskforce will pay service provider tax invoices within 30 days of the receipt of the tax invoice (refer Tender documents))

**Answer:**

It is a requirement of service contractors under the Deed of Agreement that, in the delivery of the services, the service contractor must provide continuous quality assurance and quality improvement. This includes performing quality control audits on not less than 5 per cent of all services provided in the previous month, checking for quality of workmanship, evidence of over-servicing, customer satisfaction and compliance with the Deed. Quality assurance is also carried out by Centrelink, which contacts at least 5 per cent of customers installed each month to check that the installation has been carried out and that customers are satisfied with the service they have received under the scheme.

An independent quality assurance program of technical inspections is being implemented for HAS installations in regional Victoria and South Australia. In addition the Department is strengthening its checks of occupational health and safety aspects of installations.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 149**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Is there a designated uniform warranty period for the goods and services to be provided by the installer and if so what are its terms? If further services are required to rectify a subsequent fault, will the service provider be entitled to recoup any additional costs from the government scheme? If such a follow-up service is required, will the householder be required to pay for a service that may have been inadequately provided initially?

**Answer:**

Recipients of the Household Assistance Scheme receive general free-call telephone assistance including after-installation technical assistance for twelve months. There is a 12-month warranty for the set-top box and also a 12-month in-home warranty for faulty workmanship relating to the service contractor's provision of the services and any other post-installation services the service contractor may offer.

Under the warranty, the service contractor must either replace or fix (as appropriate) the set-top box, cabling, antenna and/or satellite at the customer's premises at no cost to the Commonwealth. If the equipment cannot be replaced or fixed at the customer's premises, then the service contractor must arrange for the collection and delivery of the equipment from and to the customer's premises at no expense to the customer or the Commonwealth. The post-installation services are fully integrated into the services contracted under the Scheme, to ensure that recipients of the Scheme receive a smooth and seamless service.

Eligible households are not required to pay for any services under the Scheme, including during the 12-month warranty period.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 150**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Is the government concerned about the cross-over of service providers from the HIP to the HAS (already a dozen installers previously associated with HIP are endorsed installers under the HAS)? (*The Australian* 21/5/11) Are you concerned that the ACCC includes the digital TV switchover in SCAM watch?

**Answer:**

The involvement of a business in the Home Insulation Program (HIP) does not disqualify it from participation in the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS). Many reputable businesses were involved in the HIP.

HAS services are provided through established companies contracted by the Government. These service contractors are engaged through a competitive tender process and are required to meet high quality and service standards through rigorous contract requirements. The service contractors are contractually responsible for the quality and safety of all work carried out by their installers or sub-contractors. The department is continuing to look at ways of strengthening its OH&S checks on installations, building on other checks already implemented for the scheme.

The Department requested the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission list the digital TV switchover on SCAM Watch in 2009, after becoming aware of individuals purporting to represent the Government. These individuals were reported to be offering digital TV installation door-to-door. These cases were not related to the HAS. The HAS is not delivered door-to-door but through a carefully managed and coordinated process. The Department actively seeks to alert the community, including HAS customers, and relevant authorities to any scams relating to the digital TV switchover as it becomes aware of them.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 151**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Where are the high-definition set-top boxes that are being provided manufactured? What manufacturer's warranty is provided with the product? What is the likely shelf life of the boxes?

**Answer:**

To date, all of the set-top boxes that have been provided under the Household Assistance Scheme are substantively manufactured in China. A 12-month warranty is provided for all set-top boxes supplied under the Household Assistance Scheme. The Department seeks to procure a quality set-top box through its tender processes supported by a warranty service, but cannot speculate on the average life of a set-top box, which will depend on many factors outside our control.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 152**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

What are the service providers required to do should the HAS recipient's TV be too old to connect a set top box?

**Answer:**

It is a mandatory requirement that set-top boxes provided under the scheme are equipped with a range of connection options including options which would allow them to be connected to older televisions. A set-top box should be able to be connected to any television that has, as a minimum, an aerial socket.

To date, service providers have not advised the Department of any instances where they were unable to install a set-top box as a result of the age of the TV.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 153**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

How do you respond to the claim by Master Electricians Australia that a taxpayer-funded scheme to connect households to digital television could put workers' lives at risk due to the possibility of people rorting the government's online assessment program and the program allowing installers to operate below industry standards? (*The Age* 12/5/11)

**Answer:**

Please see the answer to Question on Notice 142.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 154**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Under the Government's Terms and Conditions of Endorsement for the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme clause 6(h), it must be ensured that the applicant personally completes the Assessment Procedure rather than someone else completing it on their behalf. How can this critical aspect of endorsement process be controlled?

**Answer:**

All installers registering with the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) are required to personally affirm their agreement to the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme at the online registration portal. They cannot proceed with their registration unless they accept the condition to personally complete the assessment.

Under the Scheme's compliance audit process, audited installers are required to provide a declaration that they personally undertook the online assessment.

Endorsement under the AIES does not automatically guarantee that the installer will be engaged in the delivery of the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS). The HAS is delivered through contracted arrangements between the government and a head contractor. The head contractor must ensure that any sub-contractors have the skills and capability to comply with the extensive requirement under the contract.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 155**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

As reported in Herald Sun (11/5/11), a large number of the digital set top boxes being issued by the government are not working. Given that under the installation arrangements, the government – appointed installer is required to ensure that the box is working as it should, why is this occurring?

**Answer:**

Please refer to Question on Notice 138.



**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 156**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Why if a household is in an area of alleged “good coverage”, as per the Digital Ready website, can reception continue to be a problem e.g. in Mount Gambier in SE SA (a city of 23,000 people), reception can be poor and even non-existent in certain circumstances?

**Answer:**

There are a range of circumstances that can lead to an individual experiencing poor reception in an area with predicted good coverage.

The coverage information provided on the Digital Ready website via the *mySwitch* web-based tool is a prediction of coverage developed by computer modelling. While the prediction does factor in the effect on coverage caused by significant variations in terrain, it is not possible to predict coverage with complete accuracy due to other possible variations in local conditions.

Where viewers had good analog reception, they would be generally be expected to have good digital reception as well. One factor that can lead to poor digital television reception is interruptions to the signal caused by local obstructions to the line-of-sight between the viewer’s external antenna and their local television transmitter. Common obstructions are hills, dense foliage (especially large trees) and man-made obstructions such as large buildings.

In other instances, poor reception of digital television in a good coverage area may be the result of reception equipment that is old or in poor repair. Reception equipment includes the antenna, any masthead amplifiers, signal splitters, cabling, connectors and leads connecting the wall socket to the digital tuner in either the television or set-top box. Old or poorly maintained equipment increases the chance of interference entering the reception system, reducing the quality of the picture and sound displayed on the television.

Incorrectly installed reception equipment can also lead to poor reception in a good coverage area. Common examples of incorrect or inappropriate equipment installations include the installation of the wrong antenna for the area (for example, a VHF antenna instead of a UHF antenna), incorrect antenna orientation (e.g. with the bars horizontal rather than vertical or vice versa) or an antenna pointed in the wrong direction.

In a number of locations around Australia, including Mount Gambier, viewers are known to have attempted to receive terrestrial television from sites other than their local transmitter. In many instances, viewers have installed extra external antennas in order to receive additional services not available from their local transmitter. These antennas are often on tall masts or towers and fitted with powerful masthead amplifiers to increase the chances of obtaining a watchable television signal from a significant distance.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

As an example, due to a number of commercial decisions made by the regional broadcasters in South Australia, the commercial digital multi-channel television services are not currently available in from the South East transmitter on Mount Burr, which serves the Mount Gambier area. However, just over 100 kilometres to the east, all the commercial and national services are broadcast from the main Western Victoria transmitter, located on Mount Dundas. Many residents of Mount Gambier have one antenna to receive the local services and another antenna attempting to receive the services from Mount Dundas in Victoria. It should be noted that WIN Television has advised that it will commence the work required to provide all the digital commercial television services in its regional South Australian markets (Mt Gambier and Riverland) in November 2011 and expects to complete this work by February 2012. This would remove the need for two antennae pointing in different directions to get all channels.

These high-powered reception systems which are fine-tuned to receive distant services can also create reception difficulties when a new local service is introduced such as a gapfiller or a self-help facility is converted to digital. If the viewer does not disconnect their masthead amplifier when pointing at the new local service, the boosted signal would be too strong and overload the digital tuner. An overloaded signal will present audio and visual problems similar to those created by a weak signal, which can lead some people to think they are in a poor coverage area when they are actually in a very good coverage area.

It is the experience of the Taskforce that, in the absence of local conditions such as terrain or dense foliage, most viewers with reception difficulties in areas of otherwise good coverage can successfully address their reception issues with the assistance of an Australian Government Endorsed antenna installer.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 157**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Is the government concerned that the head contractors selected by the government are subcontracting out the installation of set top boxes for a price around 25% of the amount that the head contractor will receive from the government? i.e. \$400 v \$100?

**Answer:**

There is no nominal price per installation paid to service contractors under the Scheme. The Scheme allows for a range of installation services, all provided at no cost to the customer. Services range from straight forward installation and demonstration of a set-top box to more complex installations requiring an antenna and external cabling, satellite equipment, or an installation at a remote premises requiring long-distance travel by the installer. The price paid to the service contractor for each installation therefore varies according to the complexity of the work undertaken.

Sub-contractor arrangements are negotiated directly between the service contractor and the sub-contractor. The Department is not a party to these arrangements.

If sub-contractors have concerns with their costs, it would be open for them to raise with the head contractor. They could also raise any concerns with the Department. To date, the Department has not had any sub-contractors contact it to raise any concerns.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 158**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Can the Government confirm that the free set-top boxes will also be made available to those persons on a disability support pension? The fact that the number of people on the DSP is now 860,000 (one in fifteen Australians of working age), the cost of distributing STBs to this group will be significant. In terms of the amount budgeted for the provision of set-top boxes to this group has any decrease in the number of people receiving a DSP been factored into the estimated cost given the government's stated intentions in this area?

**Answer:**

Eligibility for the Household Assistance Scheme includes people who are in receipt of the maximum rate of the Disability Support Pension, have a working TV and do not yet have access to digital TV.

The Disability Support Pension is administered by Centrelink, which provided projections of the number of maximum payment recipients for the purposes of the scheme.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 159**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Does the government's scheme allow for a range of help options to be offered to recipients from a mere delivery of a box to full installation? Presumably, the installer is paid less than the maximum \$400 per installation if they are merely delivering a set top box to the householder? Is that correct?

**Answer:**

Please see the answer to Question on Notice 157.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 160**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

1. Based on the pro-forma excel spreadsheet that forms part of the tender document for tender DCON/11/48, tenderers must supply separate costings for the following items, amongst other things:
  - a. Set – top – box
  - b. External antenna and cabling
  - c. Terrestrial installation
  - d. Tuning and demonstration of equipment
2. In terms of the government funding attributable to the HAS, is it the intention that the \$350-\$400 subsidy cover the whole cost of the items mentioned above? i.e. no out-of-pocket expenses for the eligible householder?

**Answer:**

The Household Assistance Scheme fully subsidises the installation required in each eligible household, which may range from a simple terrestrial set-top box to a full satellite solution. There are no out-of-pocket expenses for the eligible householder.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 161**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Will the government provide increased funding beyond the existing amount of \$376.5m should the number of eligible households exceed the government's estimate of households that will opt-in to the HAS (37% as per tender DCON/11/48)?

**Answer:**

The Department has carried out extensive work to identify the projected number of eligible households and assess the likely rate of opt-ins. The opt-in rates and the estimated costs of delivering the scheme have been further informed by the department's experience in running three rollouts in Mildura, regional South Australia and regional Victoria. The Department expects there will be further efficiencies in the program in larger rollout areas.

Consequently, the department is confident that funds provided by the Government will be sufficient for the task and any savings will be returned to the Budget.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 162**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

We note in “Schedule 3 – Pricing Schedule” of the tender document that service providers may be entitled to the receipt of incentive payments should they satisfy certain service delivery criteria. Are such payments included in the government’s \$376.5m budgeted amount?

**Answer:**

Yes.



**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 163**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Design of the HAS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

We note in Schedule 9 of the tender document that the tenderer is required to provide three years of signed financial statements. Does this mean that a successful tenderer must have been in business for a three-year period before being in contention to secure work under the tender? Isn't this three year period in contrast to the 12-month period specified in the registration requirements at the Digital Ready website? Which period is required?

**Answer:**

To provide services under the Household Assistance Scheme, there is no mandatory timeframe for how long a tenderer has been in business. In order to be selected as a head contractor, the successful tenderer must demonstrate the financial and technical ability, capability and capacity to deliver services under the scheme. The successful tenderer must also be financially viable and provide value for money. Three years of financial statements is typically used to evaluate financial viability. If the business has been running for less time it is acceptable to provide less than three years financial statements provided this is indicated in the submission.

By way of clarification, the tender documentation relates to the head contractors, being the established companies that the Commonwealth has its direct contractual relationship with. The 12-month period referred to in the Digital Ready Website relates to individual installers under the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme. The two requirements are not related.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 164**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Pooling of Subsidies**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

The DBCDE budget paper No 2 says that some \$20m will be saved in the Satellite Subsidy Scheme (SSS) from upgrading some 59 ABC / SBS self-help sites. It also says this measure will remove some 35,000 homes from being eligible for the Scheme. Presumably therefore the cost to the Commonwealth of funding the 59 upgrades is less than the \$20m saving.

- a. Is that a correct assumption – you surely would not be doing this if it cost more.
- b. Is it true that the licences for these ABC / SBS upgraded facilities are likely to be self-help licences and held by the local council?
- c. Why is the Commonwealth refusing to allow current self-help communities – where neither the broadcasters nor the government is funding upgrades – to pool their contingent SSS payments to assist them upgrade their facilities to digital?

**Answer:**

- a. Funding for this measure has been fully offset by savings from the Satellite Subsidy Scheme.
- b. Yes, the analog licenses are likely to be for self-help services, owned by local councils in many cases.

The ABC and SBS are responsible for the implementation of this measure, which includes a capital component – to cover the conversion of the self-help analog services, and an ongoing component – to assist with costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the digital service.

- c. As eligibility for the subsidy is based on a residential household, it is not consistent with Government policy for household subsidies to be provided as a pooled grant to the councils. In recent communications with Queensland local councils the Minister has set out a number of reasons why pooling will not be agreed to. The pooling of subsidies would be likely to result in a patchwork approach to self-help conversion – providing various standards of service which would be a less than optimal outcome and inconsistent with the Government's objective of providing equal television services to viewers in all parts of Australia. It is also not possible to match the cumulative level of subsidy for a community with the cost of the conversion of the facility, and for many smaller communities the pooled funds would not cover all the costs of converting self-help facilities. Pooling for some councils would also risk making the Satellite Subsidy Scheme more costly to deliver, as it would reduce the economies of scale available under the scheme, which could result in higher co-payments by households. It would also create an administratively complex scheme, requiring individual contractual arrangements with an unknown proportion of the 360 self-help licensees, layered on top of the current Satellite Subsidy Scheme model.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

Direct to home satellite is a widely used and reliable broadcasting technology. The VAST service provides a 16 channel service. The Eastern VAST service also includes a news channel. By moving to satellite, communities will avoid many of the costs associated with ongoing maintenance, electricity and other operational costs of self-help transmission facilities. In addition, terrestrial services in many cases still leave sections of the community in blackspots, and it is difficult to respond to changes in the population such as the development of new housing estates outside transmission coverage. Further, if broadcasters ever add additional digital channels, communities may face further costs in re-transmitting these terrestrially.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 165**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Pooling of Subsidies**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

At Additional Estimates, Question 421, the Coalition provided figures which clearly showed if the Commonwealth allowed the community of Normanton to pool contingent SSS payments for the 552 homes involved that probably the community would be better off establishing its own digital self-help facility and the Commonwealth would save money.

- a. On what policy basis is the Commonwealth effectively using diverted SSS funds to upgrade 59 ABS / SBS self-help facilities to digital where it has determined the worth of doing so while not allowing the same thing to happen where it is the local councils seeking to upgrade a self-help facility?

**Answer:**

There are a number of transmission sites around Australia where the ABC and/or SBS analog television service is provided on a self-help basis and all other analog services at the sites are (or will be) converted to digital by the commercial broadcasters. If the ABC/SBS analog service is not converted at these sites, then households in the coverage areas will need to install satellite reception equipment for the ABC and/or SBS channels, as well as maintaining a terrestrial antenna in order to receive the full suite of digital television services. To address this undesirable situation the Government decided to assist these communities to convert these services.

As eligibility for the subsidy is based on a residential household, it is not consistent with Government policy for household subsidies to be provided as a pooled grant to the councils. In recent communications with Queensland local councils the Minister has set out a number of reasons why pooling will not be agreed to. The pooling of subsidies would be likely to result in a patchwork approach to self-help conversion – providing various standards of service which would be a less than optimal outcome and inconsistent with the Government's objective of providing equal television services to viewers in all parts of Australia. It is also not possible to match the cumulative level of subsidy for a community with the cost of the conversion of the facility, and for many smaller communities the pooled funds would not cover all the costs of converting self-help facilities. Pooling for some councils would also risk making the Satellite Subsidy Scheme more costly to deliver, as it would reduce the economies of scale available under the scheme, which could result in higher co-payments by households. It would also create an administratively complex scheme, requiring individual contractual arrangements with an unknown proportion of the 360 self-help licensees, layered on top of the current Satellite Subsidy Scheme model.

Direct to home satellite is a widely used and reliable broadcasting technology. The VAST service provides a 16 channel service. The Eastern VAST service also includes a news channel. By moving to satellite, communities will avoid many of the costs associated with ongoing maintenance, electricity and other operational costs of self-help transmission facilities. In addition,

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

terrestrial services in many cases still leave sections of the community in blackspots, and it is difficult to respond to changes in the population such as the development of new housing estates outside transmission coverage. Further, if broadcasters ever add additional digital channels, communities may face further costs in re-transmitting these terrestrially.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 166**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Digital television**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

Does the Department consider that the \$308m set aside to install digital set-top boxes will make it more difficult to achieve a restriction on real expenditure growth to 2%?

- a. Do you consider that the Department has the resources to cope with another program (Digital Switchover Taskforce) while also administering the NBN project

**Answer:**

The Department considers this question would appropriately be addressed to the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

- a. Yes.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 167**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Digital television**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

On page 113 of Budget Measures Budget Papers No. 2, 2011-12, an item titled “Digital Television Switchover – conversion of ABC and SBS analog self-help services”, it is noted that the amount of funding to assist the ABC and SBS to convert the services to digital is not disclosed for commercial reasons. Does the government have any idea of the amounts that may be involved in this assistance package?

**Answer:**

The Government provided the SBS and ABC with additional funding in the 2011-12 Budget to convert ABC and SBS analog self-help television services to digital at sites where the full suite of commercial digital television are (or are expected) to be provided by the commercial broadcasters. The amount of funding appropriated cannot be disclosed because contracts with regard to the conversion of these services have not been finalised.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 168**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Digital Switchover Household Assistance Scheme**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

- a. What opt in or participation ratio for the estimated eligible people in remaining Switchover Areas is the \$308m appropriation based on?
- b. Have any external evaluations been made, e.g. by the Auditor-General, of the fees charged by Centrelink for its HAS activities?
- c. What are the staff and operational expenditures in relation to administering the HAS scheme within DBCDE itself? Are these included in the \$308m or are these extra to that amount?

**Answer:**

- a. The appropriation announced in the 2011-12 Budget is based on historic opt-in ratios to date, and estimates of the proportion of eligible households requiring assistance in future switchover areas as more Australians switch to digital TV.
- b. The department is not aware that such evaluations of Centrelink fees have been undertaken.
- c. The departmental funding, which is included in the \$308.8 million appropriation announced in the 2011-12 Budget, is shown in the table below.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	<b>Total</b>
<b>DBCDE departmental</b>	\$5.746m	\$8.848m	\$8.673m	\$1.235m	<b>\$24.502m</b>



**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 169**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Quality of HAS Installers**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

- a. How many installers have failed the on line accreditation test?
- b. What proportion of those attempting the test fail?
- c. Have any installers who have tried the test not eventually passed?
- d. What is the worth of an accreditation test if everyone that wants to pass eventually does so?
- e. What auditing of the on line test activities have been carried out to test any cheating via other people doing the online test for installers?
- f. What auditing work has been done in the field to check the workmanship of the 37,000 installs that have been carried out so far?
- g. What field auditing is carried out to test whether installers being used under the Scheme actually have the required signal test meters and knowledge of how to use them when carrying out installations?
- h. How many accredited installers have been 'dis-accredited' as a result of faulty workmanship or lack of ability to undertake installation work at the required level so far? If the answer is none, is it not really fundamentally improbable that everything done under the HAS is beyond fault?

**Answer:**

The requirements of the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES), which includes an online assessment, are separate to those required of installers under the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS). Completing the AIES online assessment alone does not of itself qualify an individual to conduct installations under HAS. Services under HAS are provided by major companies contracted to the government. These service contractors will subcontract individual installers, who may include endorsed installers, and are separately required to meet training standards for all installers, as detailed in the response to Question on Notice 142.

- a. All HAS installers have either passed the online assessment for the Antenna Installer Endorsement Scheme (AIES) or have completed the relevant units of competency from Certificates II and III in Telecommunications Digital Reception Technology with a Registered Training Organisation.
- b. All HAS installers must either pass the test or have completed the relevant units of competency.
- c. See b.
- d. Nationally recognised accredited qualifications in Certificates II and III in Telecommunications DRT are available, although they are not yet mandated fully by industry. The AIES online assessment does not provide accreditation nor does it purport to do so.
- e. All installers registering with the AIES are required to agree to the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme through the Scheme's online registration portal. They cannot proceed with their registration unless they accept these conditions. As part of these Terms and Conditions, each

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

installer must affirm that they personally complete the assessment procedure and that no other person completes the assessment on their behalf. Under the scheme's compliance audit process, audited installers are required to provide a declaration that they personally undertook the online assessment. Separate to this, installers contracted to deliver HAS installations must comply with the requirements of the contracts with the Commonwealth.

- f. It is a requirement of HAS Service Contractors under the Deed of Agreement that, in the delivery of the Services, the Service Contractor must provide continuous quality assurance and quality improvement. This includes performing quality control audits on not less than 5 per cent of all Services provided in the previous month, checking for quality of workmanship, evidence of over-servicing, customer satisfaction and compliance with the Deed. An independent Quality Assurance (QA) program of technical inspections is being implemented for HAS installations in regional Victoria and South Australia. In addition the Department is strengthening its checks of occupational health and safety aspects of installations. These QA programs will be managed by independent parties.
- g. In addition to the quality assurance regime outlined above at (f), Service Contractors are required to ensure that each one of their installers is properly trained, fully qualified and appropriately experienced and equipped for the services they perform. Service contractors must ensure that each approved sub-contractor complies with the terms of the deed and all laws, regulations, policies, procedures and rules of the Commonwealth that are relevant to the subcontractors performance of the services, including the requirements of the AIES. The Department undertakes random sampling of subcontractor accreditation documentation, including:
  - i. A signed Confidentiality and Privacy Deed;
  - ii. AIES approval, including the level of endorsement, expiry date and endorsement number; and
  - iii. Evidence that training has been passed and completed, including Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S).
- h. One installer has been disendorsed under the AIES and removed from conducting HAS installations by the service contractor.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 170**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Anti-Siphoning**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What will happen to the recently negotiated AFL broadcast rights deal if the parliament does not pass required enabling legislation?

**Answer:**

The *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-siphoning) Bill 2011* (the Bill) would implement the government's announced reforms to the anti-siphoning scheme. The Bill is currently being finalised and will be introduced to the Parliament when ready. If the Bill is not passed, it will have no direct bearing on the rights agreement announced by the Australian Football League (AFL) on 28 April 2011, other than in relation to digital free-to-air multichannels.

The AFL's new rights agreement covering the period 2012 to 2016 is understood to provide for live and exclusive free-to-air digital multichannel coverage of particular matches in various regions of Australia. If the Bill is not passed, the existing restrictions on the use of digital television multichannels under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* would inhibit the ability of free-to-air broadcasters to provide this type of coverage. These restrictions prevent free-to-air broadcasters from televising anti-siphoning listed events first, or exclusively, on their digital multichannels.

The government would therefore need to give consideration to removing certain specific AFL matches from the current anti-siphoning list to allow the 'premiering' of those matches on a digital multichannel, as envisaged in the AFL's rights agreement. The Minister has acted in this manner to allow matches of the 2011 AFL Premiership to be televised live on digital multichannels over the course of 2011. Details of these actions are provided in response to Question on Notice 171.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 171**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Anti-Siphoning**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. The Minister has delisted a number of events over the past six months to enable them to be shown on free to air multi-channels.
  - a. Can you tell us how many?
  - b. How many requests are currently before the Minister and what process is in place to ensure these requests are dealt with consistently?
  - c. How far ahead of events are the delisting decisions being made by the Minister?

**Answer:**

- a) The Minister approved eight instruments that removed events from the current anti-siphoning list over the past six months. A summary of the events delisted by these instruments is provided below.
  - Matches wholly or partly held during 6:00 pm and 10:30 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time played as part of the 2011 Australian Open tennis tournament.
  - One match played in Round 1 of the 2011 AFL Premiership (Carlton versus Richmond).
  - 13 Friday night matches (Rounds 1 to 4, Rounds 6 to 14) and one Thursday night match (Round 5) played as part of the 2011 AFL Premiership.
  - One race held in Hamilton, New Zealand as part of the 2011 V8 Supercars Championship Series.
  - One match played in Round 7 of the 2011 AFL Premiership (Geelong versus North Melbourne).
  - The men's and women's singles quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals held as part of the 2011 Wimbledon (the Lawn Tennis Championships) tournament.
  - Each race held in Darwin, 1 race held in Townsville and each race held in Ipswich forming part of the 2011 V8 Supercars Championship Series.
  - The semi-finals and final of the 2011 World Netball Championships.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

The Government also removed some events from the previous anti-siphoning list in the latter half of 2010. In all cases, these instruments were made by the Minister following a request from the relevant free-to-air broadcaster and after consideration of the impacts of the proposed delisting, most particularly the potential benefits of enhanced coverage for Australian viewers.

- b) As at 22 June 2011, there were two requests to remove certain events from the current anti-siphoning list before the Minister. Requests such as this are considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to a variety of matters, including the potential enhancements in the viewing experience for Australian audiences and the views of industry participants such as the free-to-air and subscription television broadcasters and the relevant sporting body.
- c) As indicated above, the decision to remove specific events from the anti-siphoning list is made on a case-by-case basis. The lead time between delisting events from the anti-siphoning list relative to when the particular events occur will depend on a range of factors, including: the timing of the initial request from the free-to-air broadcaster; the issues raised by the request (most notably the potential benefits of the delisting for Australian audiences); the length of any consultation period; and the processes involved in drafting the relevant legislative instrument and their registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May and June 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 172**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Anti-siphoning**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. What is the justification for the new six-month automatic delisting period in the anti-siphoning bill?
  - a. Isn't it the case that a number of rights to listed events are acquired within this time frame?
  - b. How does this six-month period compare with the amount of time given to free to air broadcasters to promote and schedule events where temporary delisting has been requested?

**Answer:**

The legislation that will implement the Government's announced anti-siphoning reforms will extend the current 12 week automatic delisting period to 26 weeks (six months). This will provide greater opportunity for sports bodies to negotiate openly with subscription television broadcasters for the rights to listed events that free-to-air broadcasters have chosen not to acquire. This extension will also give subscription television broadcasters more time to acquire unpurchased broadcasting rights, finalise programming schedules, negotiate advertising contracts and promote the event.

- a. The vast majority of broadcast rights to listed events are acquired by free-to-air broadcasters more than 26 weeks before the commencement of the event. While a small number of existing rights agreements for listed events were made less than 26 weeks before the events occur, free-to-air broadcasters can still acquire the rights to a listed event once it has been automatically delisted. That is, there is nothing preventing a free-to-air broadcaster from seeking to acquire rights to an event once it has been delisted.
- b. The Minister decides on a case-by-case basis whether to delist events in response to requests made by free –to-air broadcasters or sporting bodies. If the Minister agrees to delist an event, the time at which the delisting occurs will depend on a range of factors, including how far in advance of the event the delisting request is made.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2011**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 173**

**Program No. 1.3**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Anti-Siphoning**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Why was a recent application for temporary de-listing of the V8s to allow it to be played on the second channel in South Australia due to the clash caused by double header events of AFL not accepted?
- a. Why is it acceptable for the V8s to be shown on pay TV on delay but not for the eighty or more percent of South Australians who have digital television to watch it live or near-live for free?

**Answer:**

1. The request from the Seven Network to remove from the anti-siphoning list races held as part of the Winton 300 V8 Supercars event was not agreed to due to concerns arising at the time regarding the potential impact of the delisting on contractual arrangements between subscription television broadcasters and the V8 Supercars. However, following the provision of further information by the relevant parties, the Minister agreed to the removal of certain V8 Supercars events from the anti-siphoning list for the 2011 season. On 2 June 2011, the Minister made an instrument that removed from the current anti-siphoning list two races to be held as part of the Sky City Triple Crown Darwin, one race to be held as part of the Sucrogen Townsville 400, and two races to be held as part of the Ipswich 300. This will enable the Seven Network to enhance the viewing experience for Australian audiences by allowing coverage of these races to be premiered on its digital free-to-air multichannel, 7mate.
- a. South Australian viewers were able to watch the Winton 300 V8 Supercars race on free-to-air television. The Seven Network provided coverage of the Winton 300 V8 Supercars race on its main channel on delay in South Australia. As a result, free-to-air television viewers were no worse off than those viewers with access to subscription television.