

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2009
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Question No: 2

Hansard Ref: ECA 96

Topic: A-PAC

Senator MacDonald asked:

Is the A-PAC channel going to be on free-to-air across Australia?

Answer:

A-PAC is not currently available free-to-air in Australia. The free-to-air availability of A-PAC would be a commercial decision for A-PAC and any potential transmission platform provider, subject to all relevant regulatory requirements.

Since October 2003, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has authorised a datacasting trial in Sydney under a scientific apparatus licence pursuant to Part 3.3 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*. The licensee of the Sydney Datacasting Trial applied to the ACMA for the transmission of the A-PAC channel to be authorised as part of the trial. The ACMA has advised that it has decided not to agree to the addition of A-PAC to the trial. The ACMA was not satisfied that the provision of the A-PAC service would contribute to the trial of new radiocommunications technology.

The conditions imposed on the licence authorising the datacasting trial, including in relation to content programming, are a matter for the ACMA.

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Question No: 3

Hansard Ref: ECA97

Topic: Environmental hazards

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What is the impact of environmental hazards, dust and wind and those sorts of things, and will they have any direct impact on the strength of the digital signal in areas?
2. What are the types of testing the ACMA are looking at, the issues that they are considering and the time lines for them to report back as well?

Answer:

1. The strength of digital (and analog) television signals can be affected by environmental hazards, dust and wind and those sorts of things. Depending upon the location and severity of the natural weather events, the practical impact on digital reception may extend from occasional pixelation through to signal loss (blank screen), where wind conditions cause mechanical dislocation or vibration of the viewer's receiving antenna system.
2. The ACMA uses signal prediction tools based on internationally accepted standards for the prediction of signal levels, using commercially available desktop software. The prediction models are complemented by actual field survey measurements, whereby the results of such measurements are used to improve the reliability of the signal level predictions. This is an ongoing program, with priority afforded in line with the announced switchover timetable.

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Question No: 4

Hansard Ref: ECA 100-101

Topic: Blackspots quarterly reports to Parliament

Senator Ludlum asked:

What extent of the research is computer modelling and to what extent is based on field work?

Answer:

The Department does not conduct technical or scientific work in relation to digital television transmissions. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has advised that the analysis underpinning its advice to the Minister relating to the first report to Parliament under clause 5H of Schedule 4 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* is set out in the answer to the first part of written Question 67 from the February 2009 Additional Estimates.

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Question No: 52

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Digital switchover

Senator Birmingham asked:

What requests for assistance has the government received from Free to Air television broadcasters, regional television broadcasters, radio broadcasters, community television and community radio in relation to digital switchover? What response has the government provided to such requests?

Answer:

The Government is funding the switchover for national broadcasters.

Regional television broadcasters have sought funding assistance for switchover.

Community television broadcasters have sought to be included in the digital channel offering.

The Government is currently considering these requests and other proposals by Free to Air television broadcasters.

There are no requests from radio broadcasters in relation to the digital switchover.

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Question No: 61

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Conference

Senators Minchin asked:

1. How much is the Department spending to support the forthcoming digital ready conference?
2. Are guest speakers being paid for their appearance?
3. Are the costs of speakers being met by the Taskforce?
4. Have you sold all your sponsorship opportunities for this conference?
5. Are the costs of sponsorship offsetting expenses?
6. How much are you paying for event management for this conference?

Answer:

1. The costs of the conference were recovered in part through delegate registrations, sponsorships and exhibition stands. The Department's expenditure on the conference will depend on any shortfall; final reconciliations are yet to be completed.
2. All speakers appeared free of charge with the exception of Mr Mike Walsh, a leading international authority and speaker on the digital media revolution, and Ms Jenny Brockie who was the facilitator for the Discussion Panel.
3. The travel costs associated with the three international speakers and one domestic speaker were met by the Taskforce. Accommodation was provided to the three international speakers and one domestic speaker as part of the package provided by the Hilton Hotel.
4. No
5. Income from delegate registrations, sponsorships and exhibition stands helped offset a proportion of the expenses.
6. The contract with Event Planet included \$80,000.00 for professional fees to manage the development and implementation of the conference.

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Question No: 62

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Switchover timetable

Senator Minchin asked:

Can you provide a list of postcodes and towns within each switchover area as per the switchover timelines?

Answer:

The Minister will make a determination of the switchover dates and switchover areas as switchover progresses. Until such time, postcode data will not necessarily be indicative as a postcode can overlap two switchover areas.

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Question No: 63

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Self help transmission towers

Senator Minchin asked:

1. Do you agree that for future budgeting, communities maintaining their own transmission infrastructure need to know whether you will be providing financial assistance for upgrades to digital or whether a satellite service (like the Sunraysia pilot) will be the preferred option?
2. Will subsidies only cover permanent residents?
3. Have you thought about the challenges involved in areas with a high number of premises that are not the primary residence of the owner (i.e. holiday houses)?
4. Should Councils or communities be spending millions on their transmission capacity for digital if they can not get a firm commitment from you about whether you will be providing satellites or assistance to upgrade transmission infrastructure?

Answer:

1. The Government is providing a pilot of a satellite solution in Mildura and any transitional arrangements will be determined as a result of its implementation and a discussion paper to be released in coming months. Communities will be given a clear transition path, if required, in time to implement whatever decision is made by Government on their transition to digital.
2. In the Mildura/Sunraysia switchover area, any residences which can receive transmissions from the Underbool self-help transmission facility will be eligible for the proposed subsidy.
3. The Government is examining the potential issues associated with preparation of non permanent residences such as holiday homes. The first Digital Tracker enquires about the conversion of holiday homes: this will add to the understanding of the extent of this issue and assist in developing a strategy for these households.
4. Councils and community groups are not currently planning to spend millions of dollars towards the provision of digital terrestrial television services. These groups who currently provide analog services in their communities will be given a clear transition path in time to implement whatever decision is made by Government on their transition to digital. The discussion paper to be released in coming months will allow these communities to contribute to the decision making process on whether a satellite service might be extended to their switchover areas.

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Question No: 64

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Sunraysia Pilot

Senator Minchin asked:

What was the monetary value of this suite of measures for this “pilot” program?

Answer:

- \$13.6 million was allocated for the Mildura pilot program.

Senator Minchin asked:

Why wasn't the costing detail including in the announcement?

Answer:

- Detailed costings were not included in the announcement as some elements are subject to either ongoing negotiations with industry or forthcoming tender processes and are therefore commercially sensitive.

Senator Minchin asked:

What is the budgeted allocation for each measure in the package?

- In-home assistance
- Satellite service
- Education/awareness
- Labelling scheme
- National call centre and website

Answer:

See previous answer.

Senator Minchin asked:

Is this funding being met through an existing appropriation?

Answer:

- Funding for the Mildura Package will be met through a new appropriation.

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Question No: 65

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: New satellite services – announced as part of Sunraysia pilot

Senator Minchin asked:

1. Exactly what services will comprise these new satellite services?
2. From what satellite service provider will these new services be delivered?
3. In what digital compression format will the services be delivered? Mpeg 2 like all free to air terrestrial TV services or Mpeg 4?
4. Is there any where yet in Australia where an ordinary consumer could purchase a set top box for the satellite services planned?
5. How much might a complete satellite direct to home set of receiving equipment cost for the average home in Mildura to convert all its analog TV sets?
6. It is said the new satellite services will be a trial, but how could it be stopped once any Mildura homes had switched over to satellite?
7. If a set of new satellite services is established for Mildura, how could the equivalent services in terms of localism, state of origin and time zone not then have to be provided in the rest of Australia?
8. Do you have any idea of the order of cost for such satellite services to be available all over Australia?
9. To what extent could any new satellite services established be used to ‘convert’ homes in the coverage area of 650 analog terrestrial self help transmission facilities in Australia?

Answer:

1. The main standard definition channels of the commercial broadcasters for Mildura, as well as all the Victorian services of the national broadcasters are planned. The pilot satellite package will consist of:
 - National: ABC1, ABC2, ABC HD; SBS1 SBS World News, SBS HD.
 - Commercial: WIN SD, Prime SD, Ten SD.
2. The identity of the satellite service provider is subject to commercial negotiation with all broadcasters and service providers concerned.
3. The technical standard to be adopted is yet to be finalised, however the proposal is for MPEG4 as this is the most efficient technology currently available. This has no impact on the delivery or reception of terrestrial digital television.

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4. There is currently no set top box available for consumer purchase available in Australia that could be used for the purpose, but products are available overseas that could be readily adapted for use in Australia and could be made available when required.
5. As stated by Andy Townend at Senate Estimates on 23 February 2009, the approximate cost per household to obtain a satellite dish, a box and have the equipment installed is estimated to be in the region of \$660. The actual cost of the equipment and installation would depend on the particular requirements and circumstances in each home.
6. Funding for the Mildura pilot has been made available for 12 months to ensure switchover plans meet the needs of Australian viewers. The Government will ensure that there is a transition path, if required, for these Mildura residents who have taken up the offer of the satellite service, if it is discontinued at the conclusion of the pilot.
- 7, 8 & 9. The possible use of satellite to 'convert' homes covered by self-help transmission facilities will be canvassed in the discussion paper to be released in the coming months.

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Question No: 66

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Interim Help Scheme

Senator Minchin asked:

How many people/homes do you think will fall within the eligibility criteria for the announced help scheme for Mildura?

Answer:

- Please refer to Mr Townend's answer to Senator Ludlum's question (23 February 2009 Additional Estimates ECA99).

Senator Minchin asked:

How was the average figure of \$300 a home/person for the help scheme established?

Answer:

- The \$300 figure referred to is the amount of assistance to be provided to households in digital signal deficient areas under the satellite conversion subsidy. It does not relate to the average cost per household for the in-home assistance program.

Senator Minchin asked:

Will the assistance cover more than one TV set, VCR or DVD recorder per eligible home/person? IE will it assist conversion of all relevant devices in the home;

Answer:

- The in-home assistance package will convert one television per eligible household and does not extend to ancillary devices such as VCRs or DVD recorders. This will ensure continued access to TV in that household after Switchover. The conversion of additional equipment will be for the household to manage.

Senator Minchin asked:

If the assistance scheme was to be provided across Australia and the average anticipated per eligible home/person cost was similarly applied, what would be the anticipated total cost?

- As the Minister stated at the Estimates hearing, the Government has not made a policy decision along these lines (23 February 2009 Additional Estimates ECA100).

Senator Minchin asked:

An ACMA 120 home survey published on 17 February 2009 said that 25 per cent of these homes used internal portable aerials.

In relation to the 75 per cent of homes with external aerials in the same survey households ACMA said “The research identified a number of potential problems.....One of these was the prevalence of (external) aerials with damaged or missing elements....This may result in poorer reception in areas where signal strength is marginal...Overall...householders lack knowledge about aerials, cables and connections...”.

Do you have any knowledge concerning:

- (a) the percentage of existing external aerials of TV homes in Mildura that might need to be upgraded;
- (b) the number of homes in which at least one analog TV device is attached to a portable indoor aerial in Mildura; and
- (c) the likely percentage of existing indoor aerials in Mildura that will provide adequate reception of digital terrestrial signals.

Answer:

- (a), (b) and (c) The ACMA is about to undertake research in the Mildura licence area and it is anticipated that results will be published later this year.

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Question No: 67

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: The Black Spot Quarterly Report to Parliament

Senators Minchin and Ludlum asked:

1. Exactly what research is being conducted in order to provide this report to Parliament by 1 April?
2. To what extent is the research based on computer modelling and actual in the street house by house signal strength analysis in the field?
3. To what extent will the results of this research be based on what is called “the nominal domestic receiving system”?
4. Is it true that most coverage planning, modelling and signal strength testing is based on this nominal receiving system and the in built assumption that the receiving homes will have a modern relevant external TV aerial which is 10 meters above the ground?
5. In particular in the light of the ACMA survey released last week what % of TV homes might have an aerial system that complied with this criteria?
6. How useful will the black spot quarterly reports be if they really don't take into account the reception equipment and systems that the average domestic home actually has?

Answer:

1. The Department is using data obtained from previous and ongoing departmental operations, and data provided by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The ACMA advises that, in order to provide advice to the Minister relating to the first report to Parliament under clause 5H of Schedule 4 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (BSA), they are analysing the Implementation Plans submitted to it by broadcasters. These Implementation Plans set out how broadcasters intend to establish transmission facilities to meet the same coverage objective of the BSA. The ACMA further advises that it is collating information on the extent to which these Implementation Plans have been given effect through transmitter rollout.

As required under clause 5H of Schedule 4, the first report will be provided to Parliament on the first sitting day after 1 April 2009 (that is, 12 May 2009).

2. The Department does not conduct technical or scientific work in relation to digital television transmissions. The ACMA has advised that the analysis underpinning its advice to the Minister relating to the first report to Parliament under clause 5H of Schedule 4 of the BSA is set out in the answer to the first part of this question.

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3. The report will not make reference to the notion of a “nominal domestic receiving system”. The ACMA has advised that the analysis underpinning its advice to the Minister relating to the first report to Parliament under clause 5H of Schedule 4 of the BSA is set out in the answer to the first part of this question. This work does not explicitly refer to the notion of a “nominal domestic receiving system”.
4. The ACMA has advised that broadcast planning for both analog and digital services has been based on international benchmarks of what should be acceptable coverage for households. Under Guideline 9 of the Broadcasting Services (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2007, and in line with international practice, all field strength predictions and measurements relating to broadcast television planning are made at a receive height of 10 metres above ground. The Broadcasting Services (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2007 are statutory guidelines for the technical planning of individual services that use the broadcasting services bands as a means of delivery.

The ACMA further advises that planning for digital services based on these international benchmarks does not imply that it plans with the expectation that viewers have a 10 metre antenna.

5. The ACMA has advised that their Household Television Environment Research 2007-08 (February 2009) was based on 120 case studies in the greater Sydney metropolitan region. The research did not collect data that would permit a statistical quantification of the prevalence of a given height or condition of antenna systems. The research was for illustrative purposes and can not be extrapolated to inform more generalised conclusions.
6. The reports will provide Parliament with:
 - information on action taken to identify and rectify transmission infrastructure that would otherwise prevent the transmission of free to air television broadcasting services in SDTV digital mode in any area achieving the same level of coverage and potential reception quality as was achieved by the transmission of those services in analog mode; and
 - the local market areas and regions where transmission issues have been identified and how many households will be affected.

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Question No: 68

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Digital tracker reports concerning digital uptake

Senator Minchin asked:

Will you table the survey script that is being used by Newspoll for the digital tracker reports?

Answer:

The published digital tracker reports will include the basic questionnaire underpinning the script being used by Newspoll. The first report is due to be released no later than 31 May 2009.

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Question No: 78

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: New satellite services (announced in press release of 29 January)

Senator Ludlum asked:

1. How much of the \$13.6 m announced for Mildura related analog TV switch-off is related to the so called “new satellite services” to be developed for TV homes there that will have difficulty in receiving the broadcaster’s digital terrestrial TV transmissions and the 89 homes in the Underbool self help area;
2. Given that the Government commitment to pay for the satellite capacity to deliver these satellite services is for one year, is there no current guarantee to those homes in the Mildura TV Licence area that choose to use satellite as their method of digital TV conversion that these satellite services will continue after the one year “trial” expires. How would the lack of any ongoing guarantee be communicated to the target audience for the new satellite services for Mildura;
3. Given that the Mildura satellite services will use different compression (Mpeg 4) to that currently used for ‘normal’ digital terrestrial and current digital direct to home remote area free to air satellite services (Mpeg 2) (see Hansard Senate Estimates 23 February ECA 99) does that mean that
 - the trial Mildura satellite services will stand completely alone from all other current free to air digital terrestrial and satellite free to air services and that the equipment required to receive them can not be used to receive any other current satellite delivered free to air satellite services;
 - That either the ABC or SBS or Government will pay for a 4th set of ABC and SBS TV services to be available from satellite (the first being for current remote area services; the second to feed their digital terrestrial transmitters and the third to provide feeds of their services to satellite subscription TV customers). Does this seem an efficient use of taxpayers funds;
4. It is understood from Senate Estimates Hansard of 23 February ECA 90 that the Mildura satellite services will consist of “all of the services provided by ABC and SBS including ABC 1, 2 and HD and SBS 1, 2 and HD but only the simulcast standard definition (SD) version of the three local commercial free to air services”. On this basis why:
 - Are only the SD versions of the services viewed for 80% of the time by regional Victoria viewers to be included whereas services viewed for less than 2% of the time (ABC 2 and SBS 2) included; and
 - Why is an HD set top box being considered when neither the ABC or SBS are required to produce real HD programs and no commercial TV services’ HD channels will be available.

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5. Given that less than a full set of local available free to air digital TV services will be available to those in the Mildura TV licence area who take up the satellite option, has consideration been given to providing the Melbourne feed of Community TV and the national NITV service as additional services to those taking the satellite option.
6. Before determining the Mpeg 4 rather than the Mpeg 2 format was any consideration given to using exactly the same satellite transmission technology and satellite as are used for current state based ABC and SBS remote area satellite TV services, NITV and Westlink to enable the one set top box and satellite dish to be used to watch existing services as well as the newly available from satellite 3 commercial SD services?

Answer:

1. The total amount of funding to be directed towards the new satellite service is currently commercial-in-confidence as the Taskforce is in negotiation with broadcasters and service providers on the implementation and therefore the cost of the service. When these negotiations are concluded then any Government commitment will be reported.
2. The proposed new satellite service is funded for a single 12 month period only. This is most likely to be the calendar year of 2010. The identity of some satellite viewers will be known to the Government as a result of an application for subsidy. Other viewers will be identifiable as a result of the conditional access system to be implemented for the service. Should the service not be extended beyond 12 months, the Taskforce will communicate directly with these viewers and advise of the transition path available to them. The Taskforce will fully disclose the scope of the satellite service, any transitional arrangements and the effective dates of the service at the time of application.
3.
 - The equipment required to receive the service will be determined after final negotiations on the technical specifications of the service are concluded with broadcasters and service providers. Interoperability will be an issue that is considered before a final decision on specifications is taken.
 - The technical parameters of the services provided by the ABC and SBS will be decided through negotiations with these and other broadcasters. The Department will ensure, in achieving the desired extension of viewer access to digital television, that the efficient use of spectrum and taxpayer funds is properly considered.
4.
 - The anticipated commercial content on the new satellite service includes the main channels that provide unique programming content for the area at this time. At this time the HD commercial broadcasting services in the Mildura licence area are considered limited and irregular in their delivery of unique content. One commercial licensee in the area shows a show reel of HD content with only enough program material to meet the minimum HDTV quota requirement of 20 hours a week.

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- The ABC and SBS provide HD content terrestrially, which cannot be accessed without an HD terrestrial tuner. The service aims to ensure that viewers of national broadcasting services have access to the full range of content without reference to the mode of delivery. The proposal also includes HD set top boxes to avoid the problem of a legacy of SD-only boxes existing for these viewers should the service be extended past the 12 month pilot period and should HD channels remain part of the service.
5. This new satellite service is a pilot and will deliver an enhanced content proposition to those residents who cannot currently receive any local free to air digital television from the broadcaster for that licence area. Consideration was given to the inclusion of additional services that are not currently available in the licence area, however this is outside the scope of a pilot service.
 6. The intention of the proposed satellite service for Mildura is to act as a pilot for a new service and as such it incorporates newer technologies and delivery mechanisms than those currently used for remote areas of Australia. The MPEG 4 format provides more efficient use of transponder capacity and equipment is backwards compatible to allow for the decoding of MPEG 2 signals at the home.

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Question No: 79

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Interim Help Scheme

Senator Ludlam asked:

It is understood that some 3,062 homes will be eligible for the general assistance to convert to digital in the Mildura licence area (ECA 99) and that this assistance is unlimited per household including any new aerial and cabling required (ECA 100). Further some 89 homes will be eligible for the special satellite services conversion subsidy of \$300 each (ECA 99). What is your estimate of the average budgeted cost for the general assistance per eligible home (that takes up such assistance) with the budget for this activity within the \$13.6 million set aside? An estimate must exist of the total allocation to have been developed;

Answer:

- The provision of assistance to households is not unlimited. One assistance package is available per household, where at least one resident is a recipient of the full Aged Pension, Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment or equivalent payment from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Releasing information on the average budgeted cost per eligible household for the in-home assistance scheme would compromise forthcoming tender processes.

Senator Ludlam asked:

Will the general assistance cover more than one TV set, VCR or DVD recorder per eligible home/person? IE will it assist conversion of all relevant devices in the home or just one;

Answer:

- The in-home assistance package will convert one television per eligible household and does not extend to ancillary devices such as VCRs or DVD recorders. This will ensure continued access to TV in that household after Switchover. The conversion of additional equipment will be for the household to manage.

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Senator Ludlam asked:

An ACMA 120 home survey published on 17 February 2009 said that 25 per cent of these homes used internal portable aerials.

In relation to the 75% of homes with external aerials in the same survey households ACMA said “The research identified a number of potential problems.....One of these was the prevalence of (external) aerials with damaged or missing elements....This may result in poorer reception in areas where signal strength is marginal...Overall...householders lack knowledge about aerials, cables and connections...”.

Do you have any knowledge concerning:

- (a) the % of existing external aerials of TV homes in Mildura that might need to be upgraded;
- (b) the number of homes in which at least one analog TV device is attached to a portable in door aerial in Mildura; and
- (c) the likely % of existing indoor aerials in Mildura that will provide adequate reception of digital terrestrial signals.

Answer:

- Please refer to the answer to Senator Minchin’s question (QoN 66).

Senator Ludlam asked:

Is it really possible to scale a general scheme for Mildura which includes upgrading of existing aerial systems without knowing this type of information?

Answer:

- It is possible to scale a pilot program for the Mildura licence area based on experience gained from international switchover programs.

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Question No: 80

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Digital tracker reports concerning digital uptake (contract announced in September 2008)

Senator Ludlum asked:

1. It is understood that the first Digital Tracker Report will be available on 31 May 2009 (ECA 101) and that each report will contain interviews with a statistically sound selection of 300 homes (ECA 101) for each of the 32 Local Market Areas outlined by the Minister on 19 October 2008. Does that mean:
 - That each Tracker quarterly report will comprise 9,600 interviews (32 x 300);
 - And that Sydney with a TV market of around 1.6 million TV homes will have the same 300 interviewees in each survey as Mildura with 24,000 TV homes; and
 - Would this produce a statistically sound result?
2. If the above is an incorrect interpretation of what was said in relation to this matter on 23 February during Senate Estimates then could the following information be provided:
 - How many interviewees will be included in each quarterly report for each of the 32 Local Market Areas on a normal basis;
 - The amount these normal interviewee numbers might be boosted Local Market Area by Local Market Area when each Local Market Area gets closer to its declared Switch-Off date and the Minister is looking for the most detailed advice as to whether to bring forward or push back the Switch-Off date by +/- 3 months allowable.
3. Given the frailty of telephone interviews compared to in home visits to interviewees (see ACMA 17 February results) will the Tracker reports ever provide in home verification visits?
4. Further with between 5 and 10% of homes now not having a fixed land line telephone and being 'mobile only' how will mobile only homes be included in the Tracker survey?

Answer:

1. —
 - There are 33 Local Market Areas (including Darwin as an individual area). Three hundred surveys have been conducted in each Local Market Area for the first tracker survey, a total of 9900 interviews (33 x 300).
 - Yes.

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- In preparing the sample methodology, Newspoll engaged the services of Professor David Steele, Centre for Statistical and Survey Methodology, University of Wollongong. Professor Steele advises that the sample fractions in the Digital Tracker survey are such that the standard errors on the estimates from Mildura and Sydney, with equal sample sizes of 300, are effectively identical. In addition, it should be noted that a major objective of the Digital Tracker design is to support analysis of trends over time. Professor Steele advises that the design is sufficient for this purpose for each switchover area and is an effective trade-off between the level of precision and cost (budget). The sample sizes will also support some analysis for subgroups in the population.

2. —

- The minimum number of interviews per quarter, which is the basis of the 9900 conducted for the first quarter, has been established for budgetary purposes and will act as a pool of interviews which can be distributed as needed. It is unlikely to be necessary to maintain this pool at 9900 interviews over the life of the entire region by region switchover program.
- For surveys commencing in April 2009 the Taskforce and Newspoll have reviewed the sampling methodology. Consideration was given to whether an even distribution of interviews should continue (300 in each area), or whether boosting the number of interviews in areas close to switchover while reducing the number in areas that have a relatively long time until switchover would be a more effective use of resources.

The minimum number of interviews, 9900 per quarter, has been established for budgetary purposes and will act as a pool of interviews which can be distributed flexibly across markets.

3. During the development phase of the digital tracker project, a number of follow-up in-home interviews were included to test the veracity of the answers provided through the initial telephone interview. The results of these in-home visits served to finalise the language of the questions and provide a degree of confidence in the final results. Respondents are asked in the full survey if they would participate in follow up interviews and this is a mechanism by which this process can be repeated at a later stage.
4. The development of the tracker methodology included an investigation into mobile-only households and a comparison of these results with telephone results to find out if there were statistically significant variations that would warrant a separate stream of research. Newspoll concluded that at this stage this mobile-only segment of society, whilst significant and growing, did not constitute a segment that would dramatically alter the estimates of factors that we are measuring. The contract with Newspoll allows for this segment to be surveyed again at any time and it is proposed to do again to validate the main survey results.