

**Senate Standing Committee on the  
Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**  
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

**Question: 1**

**Topic: Rollover programs**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

So which programs had sought a rollover of funds? If you need to take some of this on notice, I understand. I want to know which programs had sought a rollover of funds and, obviously, then if you could also quantify for us the remaining programs and the extent of rollover that they will be seeking in the additional estimates. But, from the statement you are making, it sounds as if anything that was not sought will be sought.

**Answer:**

In the 2008-09 Budget, movement of funds were sought for the following programs: Connect Australia; E-security National Agenda Grants Program; Regional Equalisation Plan; Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Indigenous Communities; Telecommunications Consumer Representation and Research; Television Black Spots - Alternative Technical Solutions; and Telstra Social Bonus 2.

The movement of funds approved in the 2008-09 Budget context are shown in Table 3.1.2 on page 42 of the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio Budget Statements 2008-09 (see below).

Movements of funding between years	\$'000
Movement of Administered Funds from 2007-08 to 2008-09	
Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Indigenous Communities	283
Television Black Spots - Alternative Technical Solutions	750
Movement of Administered Funds from 2007-08 to 2009-10	
Connect Australia	5,172
Movement of Administered Funds from 2007-08 to 2010-11	
Connect Australia	4,882
Movement of Administered Funds from 2007-08 to 2015-16	
Regional Equalisation Plan	1,000
Movement of Administered Funds from 2009-10 to 2008-09	
Connect Australia	2,541

Any further movement of funds requests will be published in the 2008-09 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

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**Question: 2**

**Topic: Budget statements and funds movements**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Ms Scott—You asked an earlier question about movement of funds. In the additional estimates hearing we will be able to give you figures about additional estimates, but we have the figures about prior year movements relating to the figures published in the budget statements. We could go through the budget statement figures. You know how I said to you that we do not have a number of the answers to the questions that you asked and that we will have to effectively take them on notice and see how the government's deliberations go? We could refer you to the history, if you were interested, of the movements of funds.

Senator BIRMINGHAM—That is okay, Ms Scott. Taking that on notice would be a good use of our time today.

Ms Scott—Okay.

**Answer:**

Approved movements of administered funds (rephasings) for the Department and its predecessor since the 2004-05 Budget are reported in the Budget statements as outlined in the table below.

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<b>Budget Statement</b>	<b>Reference</b>
2004-05 Portfolio Budget Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.4; page 32
2004-05 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Page 26
2004-05 Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Page 12
2005-06 Portfolio Budget Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 2.4; page 33
2005-06 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.3; page 27
2005-06 Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.2; page 16
2005-06 Portfolio Supplementary Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.2; page 13
2006-07 Portfolio Budget Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 2.4; page 32
2006-07 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.3; page 28
2006-07 Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 1.2; page 16
2007-08 Portfolio Budget Statements – Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio	Table 2.4; page 33
2007-08 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements – Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio	Table 1.3; page 27
2008-09 Portfolio Budget Statements – Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio	Table 3.1.2; page 42

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**Question: 13**

**Topic: Communications Fund**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

Just in relation to the establishment of the BAF, the government originally, I think earlier this year, brought in legislation to close the Communications Fund and then withdrew that. Is my recollection correct?

Senator Conroy—That is correct, yes.

Senator MINCHIN—So you, what—formally made a decision not to proceed down that path but to combine the establishment of the BAF with the closure of the Communications Fund? Is that correct?

Senator Conroy—Essentially, yes. I guess you could characterise it that way, yes.

Senator MINCHIN—The legislation to give effect to that policy is presumably with Finance, is it?

Senator Conroy—Yes, that is a Finance—

Senator MINCHIN—Can you give us any indication of—

Senator Conroy—I am happy to take that on notice and seek advice from Mr Tanner's office, but I do not have that information.

**Answer:**

The *Nation-building Funds Bill 2008* and the *Nation-building Funds (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2008* were introduced into the House of Representatives on Thursday 13 November 2008.

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**Question: 27**

**Topic: Efficiency Dividend**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?

If so, where and at what level?

**Answer:**

In establishing the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, the impact of the efficiency dividend, together with all other budget measures, were taken into consideration in developing the initial budget for the new organisation. In aggregate, the Department's staffing levels have remained largely unchanged, with staff redirected to emerging priorities.