

Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts

Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Communications, Information Technology & the Arts Portfolio

Australian Communications Authority

Additional Estimates 2000-2001, (21-22/2/01)

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Question: 73

Topic: Spectrum auction

Hansard Page: 115

Senator Bishop asked:

Could the ACA give us a table setting out who is bidding for precisely what entitlement?

Answer:

It is not possible to indicate which lots will be sought by particular applicants in the auction of licences in the 2 GHz band.

On 19 February 2001, the registered applicants made eligibility payments to the Australian Communications Authority and, in doing so, the applicants purchased bidding rights for the auction. The payments were calculated on the basis of the lots an applicant wishes to be eligible to bid on and the ratings set for those lots. That said, there is no requirement that an applicant's bids should be constrained to particular lots. The eligibility payments and the initial eligibility simply define the limits on each applicant's bidding power in the auction.

The competition limits imposed in this auction are that a bidder can acquire:

- no more than 15 MHz of paired spectrum and 5 MHz of unpaired spectrum in capital cities (ie 25% of the spectrum available in metropolitan areas); and
- no more than 10 MHz of paired spectrum (50% of the available spectrum) in regional Australia.

An applicant who wished to bid on the maximum amount of spectrum permissible under the competition limits would need to have an eligibility of 2,825 points. The eligibility nominated and purchased by each applicant is set out in the table below:

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Registered Name	Initial Eligibility
3G Investments (Australia) Pty Limited	2,825
CKW Wireless Pty Limited	75
Hutchison Telecommunications (Australia) Limited	2,500
Optus Mobile Pty Ltd	2,825
Telstra 3G Spectrum Holdings Pty Ltd	2,825
Vodafone Pacific Limited	2,825

AAPT Spectrum (ACT) Pty Ltd, which had originally registered for the allocation, announced its withdrawal from the auction on 14 March 2001.

Outcome 1 & 2, Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 74

Topic: Project specification

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

1. What negotiations took place prior to the requests for tender being developed?
 - 1.1. Did OASITO negotiate with your agency separately from, or in conjunction with, external service providers?
2. Did any consultations take place with OASITO to develop the project specification, as part of the development of the request for tender?
3. Was there an independent review of your agency prior to the request for tender being developed and released?
4. Who conducted that review?
5. Who paid for the review and what did it cost?
6. What role did OASITO play in the review?
7. Was there much development of the project specification from the release of the request for tender to the final version of the contract?
 - 7.1 Were there significant differences?
 - 7.2 Did those differences have an impact on the cost to your agency of outsourcing?
8. Did your agency have input into the development of the project specification, the request for tender and the final contract?

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9. What processes were put into place to ensure that OASITO understood your business and any particular requirements that you have?

Answer:

1. The ACA was not involved with any direct negotiations with potential tenderers regarding the specification prior to the RFT being developed.
 - 1.1 The ACA participated in contract negotiations with OASITO and other group agencies after tender evaluation. Any further advice on the extent of negotiations prior to the issuance of the RFT should be directed to OASITO.
2. Yes. OASITO provided template RFT documents. These documents assisted ACA personnel in providing input to the tender drafting process.
3. No.
4. Refer to response to question 3 above.
5. Refer to response to question 3 above.
6. Refer to response to question 3 above.
7. Yes.
 - 7.1 The tender was refined to clarify specific requirements and reduce ambiguity and then re-issued. Further refinement reflecting negotiated positions occurred prior to final contract execution.
 - 7.2 Yes there were increased savings. Changes were made to desktop and midrange systems and minor changes to service delivery requirements. The ACA also declined offers for provision of Telecommunication Services and Application Development Services.
8. Yes, the ACA participated in the development of the project specification, the request for tender processes and in preparation of the final contract.
9. Evaluation, Contract Negotiation and Steering Committees were established. The ACA was represented on each Committee.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 75

Topic: Tender Evaluation

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

[The Humphry report at p 95 says OASITO's responsibilities in the IT initiative included the following:

- i) **to provide guidance and assistance to agencies as they participate in tender processes;**

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- ii) to manage the evaluation and negotiation process to ensure fairness and probity;**
- iii) together with agencies ensure a fair financial evaluation (p 96)]**

10. Who was responsible for evaluating the tenders?
11. What was the process for evaluating the tenders? Can you outline the steps in the evaluation process?
12. Was your agency involved in each stage of the process?
13. Were agencies excluded from any stage in the process?
14. Was your agency involved in the industry development evaluation stage of the process?
15. What role did OASITO play in the tender evaluation for your group?
16. What role did your agency play in the tender evaluation process:
 - 16.1. individually?
 - 16.2. Or as a member of a cluster grouping?
17. What was the extent of that role?
18. At any time in any of the tender evaluation processes, did the cluster grouping make a recommendation for a particular tenderer which did not conform with OASITO's views?
19. What was behind the difference of opinion – on what basis was there a difference of opinion?
20. How was the difference of opinion resolved in each case – what was the outcome?
21. Were there any interim reports or discussion papers issued by OASITO setting out the different points of view, the basis for the differences and proposed courses of action?
22. Did OASITO award a contract during any process to an external service provider, which was not the service provider recommended by the agencies as a group?
23. Did you develop or have any part in developing the tender evaluation reports?
24. Can you make these available?

Answer:

10. Evaluation Committees managed the evaluation of tenders. Significant decisions were endorsed by the Steering Committee. The ACA was represented on these committees.
11. ACA personnel were members of the group Agency teams that collectively undertook tender evaluation. The corporate, technical and financial aspects of the responses were addressed with assistance from OASITO and their advisers. The teams provided reports for consideration and finalisation by the Evaluation and Steering Committees.
12. Yes, except for the Industry Development Evaluation and Options committee.

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13. The ACA did not participate in evaluating the Industry Development component of the tender responses.
14. Refer to responses to 13 above.
15. Chaired the IT Services Evaluation Committee, the IT Services Steering Committee and the Options Committee.

Participated as a member of three of the specialist evaluation committees (technical, corporate capability and financial) which were chaired by agency staff.

Provided physically secure evaluation facilities including premises and a secure and dedicated computer infrastructure.

Provided agency evaluation staff access to its legal, strategic, probity and financial advisers as required to assist them in their evaluation.

Provided evaluation and probity training to all personnel selected by each agency to participate in the evaluation process;
- 16; 16.1; 16.2 ACA personnel participated as members of a cluster grouping.
17. To impartially assess tender responses and collectively make assessments on the technical solutions offered, corporate capability and the financial elements of the tender responses.
18. This question should be directed to OASITO. It is difficult for the ACA to provide advice on behalf of the group.
19. See response to 18 above.
20. See response to 18 above
21. This question should be directed to OASITO. The ACA has no knowledge of any such papers.
22. This question should be directed to OASITO.
23. ACA personnel were members of the group Agency teams that collectively undertook tender evaluation.
24. This question should be directed to OASITO.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 76

Topic: Contract negotiations

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

25. What role did your agency play in contract negotiations?
26. Did your agency have its own legal representation during the contract negotiation stages?

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27. What components were outsourced – what services does the ESP provide to your agency?
28. Why was it deemed necessary to sell to the provider the hardware at the commencement of the contract and buy the hardware back from the provider at the end of the contract?
 - 28.1 Is this a normal arrangement?
 - 28.2 Were both mainframe and desktop components included in the hardware transfer?
 - 28.3 What is the life of your mainframe?
 - 28.4 Why was the mainframe included in the transfer?
 - 28.5 What is the life of a desktop unit?
 - 28.6 When did you last replace your desktop units?
 - 28.7 When is the external service provider scheduled to replace your desktop units?
 - 28.8 What provision is there in your contract for the adoption of new technology?
 - 28.9 Are you concerned that your agency may not have the flexibility it once had to adopt new technology or to only do so at additional cost?
 - 28.10 What is your agency's potential liability for re-acquisition of assets at the end of the contract?

Answer:

25. The ACA was a member of the team involved in the preparation of negotiating briefing material. OASITO conducted the contract negotiations.
26. No.
27. The contractor provides IT helpdesk, networking, desktop and midrange services to the ACA.
28. The hardware buy-back is one of the options available to the ACA at the end of the contract period.
 - 28.1. This question should be directed to OASITO.
 - 28.2. Only desktop components, the ACA has no main frame computers.
 - 28.3. Not applicable, refer 28.2 above.
 - 28.4. Not applicable, refer 28.2 above.
 - 28.5. The contractor is required to replace Desktop units older than 3 years of age.
 - 28.6. The ACA replaces desktop units on a 3 year rolling basis. Units older than 3 years are progressively being replaced by the contractor.
 - 28.7. Some 260 desktop units will have been replaced by end of March 2001.

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- 28.8. The contract has provision for introducing new technology. In addition the terms of the contract allows the ACA to add or remove services from scope. This allows the ACA the flexibility to adopt and take advantage of emerging technologies.
- 28.9. No. Additional costs are only incurred if additional services are added to the scope of the agreement.
- 28.10. The ACA's potential liability differs significantly at the end of the contract term depending on what course of action is pursued by the ACA or the group in order to meet business needs.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 77

Topic: Clustering approach

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

29. The Humphry Review report concluded that "grouping of agencies has served a useful purpose in enabling economies of scale and providing a coordinated approach to the market" [para 2.1, p11], but that as the Initiative has matured the original rationale for grouping appears to be less relevant:
- 29.1 What is your view on that conclusion – was the clustering of agencies an appropriate approach to the implementation of the policy?
- 29.2 What benefits did the approach deliver?

Answer:

- 29.1. The ACA is committed to the Outsourcing Initiative and supports the group approach.
- 29.2. It is doubtful whether the ACA would have been able to muster sufficient expertise to engage in the process without exposing itself to significant risk.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 78

Topic: Agency costs and savings

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

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30. What advice did you provide to DOFA/OASITO in relation to potential savings from outsourcing prior to actually outsourcing?
31. Did your estimates of cost savings differ from OASITO's? – If so, what was the quantum of the difference and how were the different figures arrived at?
32. Were OASITO's projections re cost savings accurate? If not, why not?
33. What expenditure was incurred by you in preparation for outsourcing?
34. Has outsourcing been cost effective for your agency?
35. Was any liability for the re-acquisition of assets [guaranteed buy back] at the end of a contract factored into the savings estimates?
36. The Humphry review also stated that there is broad agreement that the Initiative has delivered significant cost savings. However, the Audit report came to a different conclusion, arguing that savings estimates were unreliable and that significant elements of any savings calculation had been omitted.¹ [ie (1) the service potential of agency assets on hand at the end of the evaluation period and (2) the cost of guaranteeing ESP's asset values]:
- 36.1 Do you agree that there is broad agreement that the Initiative has delivered significant cost savings?

Answer:

30. Prior to outsourcing the ACA did not advise either OASITO or DoFA on potential savings to be realised by the ACA.
31. The ACA has not yet developed a view on cost savings given the contract is still in its first year of operation.
32. This is yet to be determined given the contract is still in its first year of operation.
33. This information is not readily available. As IT Outsourcing is a Government initiative ACA did not specially cost its participation in the initiative.
34. This has yet to be determined given the contract is still in its first year of operation.
35. No. Savings estimates did not include any re-acquisition of assets at the end of the contract.
- 36.1. The ACA has not yet developed a view on the delivery of cost savings given the contract is still in its first year of operation.

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Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 79

Topic: Service delivery standards and service provision

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

37. What service delivery standards were agreed with OASITO by agencies prior to finalisation of contracts? What negotiations/discussions took place between OASITO and agencies?
 - 37.1 Were service delivery standards written into contracts?
 - 37.2 How are service delivery standards measured?
 - 37.3 How are service delivery standards reported on?
 - 37.4 Are service credits being imposed?
38. Have the contractual arrangements been able to provide adequately for effective levels of service – have you experienced higher levels of service or lower levels of service since your IT requirements have been outsourced?
 - 38.1 What have been the major problems?
 - 38.2 What has this cost your agency?
 - 38.3 Are the costs of any downtime and poor service delivery factored into the savings figures?
 - 38.4 What are the improvements in the service delivery? What level of savings have been made?
39. Has your agency been required to request services which are outside those provided for under the contract?
40. Please advise of any 'extra contract' services required and the costs of the provision of those services.
41. Have agency operations been constrained because it is unable to provide a service because it has not been specified under the contract:
 - 41.1 Would this be because there are either no or limited funds available for extra contract service provision?
42. What outages did you experience during the contract period?
43. What service credits have been imposed as a result of outages?

Answer:

37. The Group 8 Agency teams agreed a mix of service delivery standards. Some standards were applied to all Agencies whilst others were only applied to a specific Agency.
 - 37.1. Yes

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- 37.2. Measurement criteria for service delivery were included in the contract.
- 37.3. Contract Management Units within each Agency monitor performance levels. The contractor provides monthly reports.
- 37.4. The Group 8 Agencies are assessing whether service credits will be imposed.
38. Yes. The contractor has had difficulty in meeting some service levels. The Group 8 Agencies are committed to working with the contractor to address any performance issues.
- 38.1. A number of failures have occurred in the provision of networking, desktop and midrange services.
- 38.2. There have been no cost estimates undertaken.
- 38.3. No.
- 38.4. Given the contract is still in its first year of operation we have insufficient data to answer this question.
39. The ACA has chosen to engage the contractor to provide a networked based video conferencing system. This work is outside the contracted scope of work.
40. The installation of the network based video conferencing system is not yet complete. The ACA is yet to decide on a servicing contractor.
41. No
- 41.1. No.
42. A number of small failures have occurred in the delivery of networking, desktop and midrange services.
43. The ACA is still assessing the impact of these outages and will make an assessment at a later date on whether Service Credits should be imposed.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 80

Topic: Employment Impacts

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

44. Has the ESP been able to ensure continuity of contracted staff servicing your agency?
45. Is there any indication that the changes to the taxation system, which deems contractors/self employed persons to be employees and bound by PAYE requirements, to have impacted on the continuity of service by people employed by ESP's or by sole contractors?

Answer:

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44. Yes. The contractor has been able to provide necessary staff.
45. No.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2
Topic: Privacy matters

Question: 81

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

46. Were privacy matters a significant issue for you?
47. What consideration was given to privacy matters a) in the request for tender and b) in the contract?
48. What were the cost implications of your privacy requirements?
49. Were you confident that the ESP had a commitment to and could guarantee the appropriate privacy protections?

Answer:

46. The ACA has no specific or additional Privacy requirements however all contract staff are required to sign a Group 8 confidentially agreement.
47. Both the RFT and Contract have privacy clauses.
48. The ACA is not aware of any cost implications.
49. Yes.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 82

Topic: Intellectual Property Matters

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

50. Were intellectual property matters an issue for you?
51. Was this significant?
52. What consideration was given to IP matters a) in the request for tender and b) in the contract?
53. Is it possible to value the IP component of your IT requirements?

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Answers:

50. There were no issues.
51. Refer to response to question 50.
52. a) The RFT addressed a number of IP matters to be taken into consideration by prospective tenderers when responding to the RFT. b) The contract requires the Contractor to set up an IP Register and maintain currency of this register.
53. No. However the ACA has included one piece of internally developed software on the IP register. Use of this software allowed the ACA to reduce the number of staff in its IT team.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 83

Topic: Audit Report

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

54. The Audit report contained a Whole of Government response to the report – have you any comment on that response and did it accurately reflect your own agency's views on all the findings and recommendations?
55. If not, where did your views differ from the whole of government response?

Answer:

- 54, 55. The performance audit conducted by the ANAO did not extend to the Group 8 tender evaluation process.

Outcome 1&2, Output 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Question: 84

Topic: Humphry review

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Lundy asked:

56. What is your reaction to the findings of the Humphry review?
57. Did your agency have input into the Humphry review?

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58. Was that input written or oral – did you meet with Mr Humphry?
59. Were any meeting notes or minutes taken or any documentation at all developed out of these meetings?
60. Did the secretariat discuss any meeting notes with you – distribute any meeting notes for your comments?
61. Would it surprise you to know that there is no documentation standing behind the findings and recommendations of the Humphry review?
62. Will your agency continue to outsource at the conclusion of the present contract?
63. What implications will it have for your agency if you decide not to continue with the present contract provider?
 - 63.1. What are the financial implications?
 - 63.2. What are the hardware and software implications?

Answer:

56. The ACA has noted the findings and will implement any recommendations to the extent they are relevant to this Agency.
57. Yes
58. The ACA provided an oral report the Secretariat to the Humphry.
59. The ACA took no notes of the meeting.
60. No.
61. The ACA is not in a position to comment on the actions of the review secretariat.
62. The ACA will evaluate the success of the Outsourcing initiative with other Group 8 Agencies closer to the end of the current contract term.
63. If there were a decision not to continue with the current contractor, ACA would require additional skills and resources to prepare and assess tenders.
 - 63.1. Additional costs associated with a re-tender process. Hardware strategies will be developed during the course of the contract.
 - 63.2. Only a small amount of software is owned by the contractor. Critical business software remains licensed to the ACA. Hardware exit strategies will be developed during the course of the contract.

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Outcome 2, Output 2.1

Question: 85

Topic: Telephone Sex Services

Written Question on Notice

Senator Harradine asked:

The ACA spent \$43,000 in performance of its responsibilities under Part 9A of the T(CPSS) Act (phone sex). Does the ACA consider that it has given sufficient priority to this area and undertaken its responsibilities effectively?

Answer:

The ACA has attached adequate priority and devoted significant resources to the establishment of an effective telephone sex monitoring and enforcement regime. The amount of \$43,000 refers to the cost of on going staff and monitoring expenses.

In addition to the information provided in response question 1A for the previous Questions on Notice, additional tasks undertaken by the ACA include:

- finalising processes with the ABA to facilitate the issue of Evidentiary Certificates under section 158F of the T(CPSS) Act where circumstances permit;
- obtaining legal advice in relation to key aspects of the T(CPSS) Act;
- meetings with Telstra, the ABA and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) to exchange information and views and to establish effective monitoring and referral procedures;
- referral of eight cases to the ABA for consideration and potential issue of Evidentiary Certificates. (At this point, the ABA has not finalised its investigation in relation to those referrals.); and
- outsourcing of media monitoring to provide regular reports on telephone sex advertising.

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Outcome 2, Output 2.1

Question: 86

Topic: Telephone Sex Services

Written Question on Notice

Senator Harradine asked:

What action has been taken by the ACA to advertise its role and responsibilities?

Answer:

As noted in the ACA's response to question 3A of the previous Questions on Notice, the ACA has written to a range of industry participants, such as carriers and media outlets, to inform them about the requirements of the legislation and ACA expectations regarding compliance. The ACA is also in the process of writing to all carriage service providers outlining its expectations to ensure compliance with the requirements of Part 9A of the T(CPSS) Act.

Outcome 2, Output 2.2

Question: 87

Topic: Telephone Sex Services

Written Question on Notice

Senator Harradine asked:

What progress has been made to develop a web page for inclusion on the ACA website?

Answer:

Once the ACA has finalised the written material referred to in question 088, it will upgrade its website so consumers can access that information electronically. The ABA is the authority responsible for the assessment of whether a service is a telephone sex service for the purposes of the Act. The ABA has information on its web site relating to this matter.

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Outcome 2, Output 2.2

Question 88

Topic: Telephone Sex Services

Written Question on Notice

Senator Harradine asked:

When will the ACA be releasing some written material (eg fact sheets) to increase public awareness of its role and responsibilities?

Answer:

The ACA considers that the production of written material such as fact sheets for consumers will form a key part of its strategy for the administration of Part 9A. In particular, it considers that information for consumers about options for barring access to all premium services (not just 1901 telephone sex services) will benefit consumers. This is because one of the key issues for consumers not addressed by the provisions of Part 9A is the liability for large bills for other premium services (such as clairvoyant or astrology services). A consumer alert along these lines is currently in preparation. A fact sheet can now be finalised now that processes for the production of Evidentiary Certificates under the Act are finalised.