

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

**ADDITIONAL SENATE ESTIMATES – 9 FEBRUARY 2010
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Digital Television Switchover – Household Assistance Scheme Letter to Potentially Eligible Households

Question reference number: HS 21

Senator: FIFIELD

Type of question: Hansard F&PA page 101, 9 February 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 5 (including attachments)

Question:

Senator FIFIELD - ...I specifically want to focus on the first area where the switchover is going to take place, which I think is Mildura - the Sunraysia district. At the last estimates we were advised, I think, that letters were not sent out to, say, people on the DSP until six months before the switchover to advise them of the assistance that was available. The Mildura switchover is now within six months. Have letters been sent to DSP recipients, for instance, in the Mildura/Sunraysia area?

Senator FIFIELD - Would you be able to provide the committee with a copy of that letter?

Answer:

Please find attached the letter with an information pamphlet about the Household Assistance Scheme that was sent to potentially eligible households in the Mildura television licence area from 19 January 2010. Letters with an information pamphlet were sent to all potentially eligible Age Pensioners, Disability Support Pensioners, Carer Payment recipients and eligible Department of Veterans' Affairs recipients.

Customer Reference Number: **123 456 789A**

Mrs 1StName Surname
21 Jump St
MILDURA VIC 3500

15 February 2010

Dear Mrs Surname

Change to Digital Television - Household Assistance Scheme

Across Australia, free-to-air television signals are being progressively switched from the current analog signal to a digital signal from 2010 to 2013.

This means that, after the switch, you will **not** be able to get television reception unless you have a digital television, set top box or a similar device.

To help you make the switch to digital, you may be eligible for the Australian Government's Household Assistance Scheme. The program is free of charge and will be provided by qualified, Government-contracted installers.

The package includes:

- a high definition set top box
- the set up and installation of the set top box
- instructions on how to use it, and
- any necessary upgrades to your cabling and antenna system.

Centrelink is assisting with the delivery of the scheme to all eligible households, including eligible Veterans' Affairs customers.

To find out if you are eligible for assistance, please call **1800 556 443** between 8.00am and 5.00pm (local time), Monday to Friday, by **30 June 2010**.

For more information about digital switchover, visit www.australia.gov.au/digitalready or call **1800 201 013**. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, call TTY service Freecall **1800 810 586**. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

The enclosed brochure has more information about the Household Assistance Scheme.



Australian Government

Department of Broadband,
Communications and the Digital Economy

Digital Switchover Taskforce



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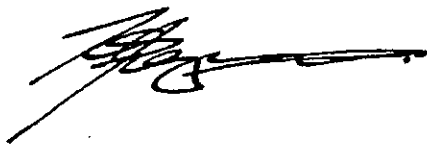
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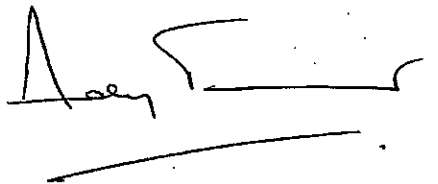
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If you wish to comment on the quality of service you received from Centrelink, you can talk to Centrelink's Customer Relations staff on **1800 050 004** or the TTY phone on **1800 000 567** if you have a hearing or speech difficulty. If you have contacted Centrelink's Customer Relations staff with a concern and they have not been able to resolve it to your satisfaction, you can call the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office on **1300 362 072**.

Yours sincerely



Hank Jongen PSM
General Manager
Centrelink



Andy Townend
Executive Director
Digital Switchover Taskforce



How do I apply?

If you are eligible for the Household Assistance Scheme you'll need to:

Call 1800 55 64 43 between 8.00am and 5.00pm (local time), Monday to Friday, to find out if you are eligible.

If you are eligible, a qualified government-contracted installer will then call you to make an appointment to come to your home. The installer will send you a letter to confirm the appointment time.

The government-contracted installer will not charge you for this service. If you have any doubts about the identity of the contractor, please call 1800 20 10 13.

When can I apply?

The Household Assistance Scheme is available for six months before and one month after the switch to digital in your region. For example, in the Mildura TV licence area the switch is happening on 1 July 2010, so the scheme will be available from 1 January to 31 July 2010.

You may receive a letter inviting you to contact Centrelink at the beginning of the switch to digital for your TV licence area.

Timetable

This is when the switch to digital is happening in your area:

Mildura	1st Half 2010
Regional SA & Broken Hill	2nd Half 2010
Regional VIC	1st Half 2011
Regional QLD	2nd Half 2011
Southern NSW & ACT	1st Half 2012
Northern NSW	2nd Half 2012
Tas, Perth & Brisbane	1st Half 2013
Melbourne, Adelaide, Darwin & Sydney	2nd Half 2013
Remote Central and Eastern Australia, Regional and Remote WA and all other areas	2nd Half 2013

Where can I find out more?

For the Household Assistance Scheme, call **1800 55 64 43**

To find out more about the switch to digital TV visit:

www.australia.gov.au/digitalready

or call the Digital Ready Information Line on **1800 20 10 13**

It's time to get



for digital TV



Australian Government

Do you need help to switch to digital TV?

About the Household Assistance Scheme



Between 2010 and 2013, Australia is switching off the analog TV signals and converting to digital TV.



What is digital TV?

The word 'digital' simply refers to the way in which TV signals are sent to TVs in homes around Australia. Currently in Australia, TV is broadcast in both digital and analog. However, the analog signals will be gradually phased out, and Australian TV will become **digital only**.

Why is Australia switching to digital?

With digital TV most people will enjoy a better picture and improved sound, and they will have more channels to choose from. Many countries have already moved to digital TV. By switching to digital, Australia will be keeping pace with the rest of the world, and will continue to have access to the latest programs and technology.

Do you need help to switch to digital TV?

To keep receiving free-to-air TV after the digital switchover, you will need a TV that is capable of receiving digital signals. You can either convert your analog TV to digital by using a set top box or digital recording device, or you can buy a TV with a built-in digital tuner.

The Australian Government understands that some people will need help to get ready for digital TV. That is why we have introduced the Household Assistance Scheme.

What is the Household Assistance Scheme?

The Household Assistance Scheme will help eligible households to receive digital free-to-air TV signals. This package is **free of charge**, with a maximum of one per household (including if you move house or change residence) and will be provided by qualified government-contracted installers. It includes:

- a high definition (HD) set top box;
- the set up and installation of the set top box;
- instructions on how to use it; and
- any necessary upgrades to cabling and antenna systems.

Is there any difference if I rent or own my home?

Yes, there is. If you live in a **rented home**, the installer can supply and install a set top box and upgrade the indoor antenna or cabling, but they cannot make changes to external antennas or cabling. You may wish to speak to your landlord or the relevant owners corporation to arrange these upgrades, if required.

If you **own your home**, the installer can supply and install a set top box and make any necessary changes to your cabling and antenna system. Depending on where you live, you may need permission from your owners corporation or local council before any changes can be made to external antennas.

Who is eligible?

You will be eligible for help provided:

- You live in a household where you or your partner receives the **maximum rate** of one of the following payments:
 - Age Pension
 - Disability Support Pension
 - Carer Payment
 - Department of Veterans' Affairs Service Pension, or
 - Department of Veterans' Affairs Income Support Supplement.

You do not currently have access to digital TV. (If you can watch ABC 2, then you probably do have access to digital TV.)

You live in a TV licence area that is currently switching to digital