


To: The Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications (for decision)

Subject: Mobile Black Spot Program - Request for extension of time for base stations funded under Rounds 1-5A experiencing delays.

Critical Date: Please action by 30 June 2023. The relevant funding agreements end 30 June 2023 and will need to be extended by this date.

Recommendations:	
1. That you agree to an extension of time of up to 12 months from 30 June 2023 for 176 base stations funded under Rounds 1-5A of the Mobile Black Spot Program experiencing delays (Attachments A, B, C and D).	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Agreed / <input type="radio"/> Not Agreed
2. That, subject to your agreement above, you sign the draft letters to the Chief Executive Officers of Telstra, Optus, TPG Telecom and Field Solutions Group (Attachment E).	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Signed / <input type="radio"/> Not Signed
<p> The Hon Michelle Rowland MP</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date: 22/6/23</p> <p>Comments:</p>	

Key Points:

1. The funding recipients are seeking the Commonwealth's agreement to an extension of time (EOT) for up to 176 base stations (Telstra 101; Optus 56; TPGT 4; FSG 15) funded under the first five rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program (the Program), which are experiencing delays and forecast not to be completed by 30 June 2023 (base stations are listed by provider at **Attachments A, B, C and D**, respectively).
2. Site acquisition issues such as acquiring access to suitable land, obtaining relevant planning approvals and connection of mains power continue to affect the completion dates. Severe weather events and floods in the past 12 months have also caused delays with some sites across the country.
3. Of the 176 Rounds 1 to 5A base stations experiencing delays, 107 are currently forecast to be complete by 31 December 2023, and a further 38 by 30 June 2024. ^{s47(1)(b)} [Redacted] Telstra and Optus have notified of an additional 14 sites to be frustrated (sites that cannot be built), which we will brief you separately on.

MS23-003499

4. Telstra's EOT notice forecasts 13 of its 101 sites to be completed by 30 June 2023, but included these sites in their EOT Notice in case unforeseen circumstances delay them beyond June 2023. Five of the 101 sites are expected to be frustrated and the remaining 83 sites are forecast to be completed by 30 June 2024.
5. s47(1)(b) [REDACTED]
6. TPGT are still progressing delivery of their remaining four sites, two each funded under Rounds 1 and 2, and are forecasting completion of all four sites by June 2024.
7. s47(1)(b) [REDACTED]
8. Under the funding agreements, a request for an EOT can be agreed to or the relevant base stations removed from the Program. If agreed to, this EOT will extend the respective funding agreements for 12 months.
9. We recommend you approve the EOT requests for a period of up to 12 months from 30 June 2023 for the delayed base stations, so sites that are progressing can be completed. We consider, on balance, it is better to exhaust all reasonable options to deliver these base stations, albeit later than preferred.
10. Should you agree to the EOT requests, we have emphasised in the draft letters to the funding recipients that any sites not completed by 31 January 2024, will need to have achieved Acquisition, Access and Approval (AAA) status by that time, or clearly demonstrate that AAA status can be achieved and the site completed by 30 June 2024. This will allow you to consider the merits of whether further EOTs beyond June 2024, for sites not progressing, should be agreed.
11. Should you not agree an EOT for one or more sites, those sites are then deemed to be frustrated under each of the respective funding agreements and defined to be an Affected Site.
 - a. s47G(1)(a) [REDACTED]
 - b. [REDACTED]
12. Draft letters to the Chief Executive Officers of the respective funding recipients are attached, requesting that they prioritise completion of these Rounds 1-5A sites by 30 June 2024 (**Attachment E**).
13. The four TPG sites and s47G(1)(a) [REDACTED] all have Mobile Network Hardening Program (MNHP) Round 1, Stage 1 funding allocated to them, to extend their battery back up to at least 12 hours. Under the respective Program Round 1 and 2 Variation Agreements, these sites will also require an EOT to deliver the extended back up battery requirements, which will be completed as part of the construction of the base stations. We will brief you separately on MNHP EOT requests (MC23-003500).

Financial impacts:

14. If you agree to the EOTs for Rounds 1-5A of the Program, a movement of funds (MOF) from 2022-23 to 2023-24 will need to be sought through the 2023 MYEFO Budget process to

support contractual payments for agreed sites. This MOF would be in the range of \$35 million to \$45 million, depending on the number of sites and timing of final true-up and reconciliation processes required for each funding recipient and each round of the Program. We will work with funding recipients to determine the MOF value as we approach MYEFO.

- 15. We note there is currently funding available in 2023-24 of \$42 million under the Program, of which \$27 million is allocated to Rounds 1-5A for making final payments, and \$15 million for the Improving Mobile Coverage Round (Round 6). As such, this funding is not available to offset contractual milestone payments for the EOT requests.
- 16. However, in 2023-24 there is currently \$190 million in funding available under the Better Connectivity Plan (BCP) which will need to be used to offset funding required for approved EOT requests until such time as a MOF can be considered through the 2023 MYEFO process.
- 17. We consider this approach low risk as adequate BCP funds will be available to cover the EOT MOF amount until MYEFO. We consider the risk of a MOF not being approved at MYEFO as low, given that contracted projects form a legal obligation for the Commonwealth, and the BCP is a priority for Government as both an election and Budget commitment.

Legal/Legislative impacts: See paragraph 17

Stakeholder Implications:

- 18. Community interest in the Program is high and there may be some discontent where base stations are delayed. However, the only other option would be to remove the delayed and uncompleted sites from the Program.
- 19. We will continue to work with Telstra, Optus, TPGT and FSG to deliver base stations prior to 30 June 2024, and manage stakeholder and public expectations for sites experiencing delays.
- 20. If you agree to the EOT requests, we will notify the funding recipients and request that they update their public website to reflect the revised forecast completion dates for each site.

Consultation:

- 21. Telstra, Optus, TPG Telecom, Field Solutions Group, External Budgets

Media Opportunities:

- 22. Nil. We can work with the funding recipients and your office to manage stakeholder and public expectations for sites experiencing delays.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Telstra’s sites forecast to be delayed beyond 30 June 2023.
- Attachment B: Optus’ sites forecast to be delayed beyond 30 June 2023.
- Attachment C: TPGT’s sites forecast to be delayed beyond 30 June 2023.
- Attachment D: FSG’s sites forecast to be delayed beyond 30 June 2023.
- Attachment E: Letters to the CEOs of Telstra, Optus, TPG Telecom, Field Solutions Group.

Cleared By: Karly Pidgeon	Contact Officer: s22(1)(a)
Position: Assistant Secretary	Section: Mobile Programs Implementation
Division: Communications Services & Consumer	Ph: 6271 s22(1)(a)(ii)
Ph: 6271 s22(1)(a)(ii)	
Cleared Date: 19/06/2023	

Instructions for MPS: If agreed and signed, please email letters to recipients.

Responsible Adviser: s22(1)(a)(ii)

PDMS Distribution List: Jim Betts, Richard Windeyer, Daniel Caruso

Site Id	Round	Location	STATE	Electorate	Aspirational Target	State Funded	Justification	Comment
MBSP-VIC-112	Round 1	Goldie	Victoria	McEwen	31/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays within the site acquisition phase with regard to 3rd party consent to undertake excavation works. Traditional owners response to multiple submissions of CHMP delayed. Excavation works by hand underway. Availability of Registered Aboriginal parties and artifact identification construction delaying works	Current AAA forecast 30/6/22
MBSP4-NSW-001	Round 4	Afterlee	New South Wales	Page	30/06/2024		Site Frustrated, CwltH Notified- replacement site pending	Frustrated, CwltH Notified, second replacement site to be nominated - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from CwltH approval for replacement site
MBSP4-NSW-025	Round 4	Boro, Boro Road (Mayfield)	New South Wales	Eden-Monaro	30/06/2024		Site Frustrated, CwltH Notified- replacement site pending	Frustrated, CwltH Notified, second replacement site to be nominated - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from CwltH approval for replacement site
s47G(1)(a)								
MBSP4-QLD-008	Round 4	Cedar Creek	Queensland	Dickson	15/08/2023	Y	Site was Frustrated with Replacement site nominated. Telstra then reviewed other possible candidates close to original location. Only one candidate can progress. Candidate is on Council land where commercial terms have been agreed. Council have requested multiple information requests on DA submission. Notification period finished with decision on DA to be voted on at Council meeting TBA. Awaiting outcome	AAA forecast can not be provided at this stage.
MBSP4-VIC-013	Round 4	Grampians Rd (Halls Gap To Dunkeld)	Victoria	Wannon	19/07/2023	Y	Constant delays with Air Services approvals, delays with required power supply and Air Services approval. Vic parks consent required, now with Minister for approval. Commercial terms for licence were previously agreed but Vic parks have changed rental amount. Lawyers reviewing .	Current planned AAA forecast is June 2022
MBSP4-NSW-019	Round 4	Kamarah	New South Wales	Farrer			Site Frustrated, CwltH Notified- replacement site pending	Frustrated, CwltH Notified, second replacement site to be nominated
s47G(1)(a)								
MBSP4-WA-021	Round 4	Patjarr	Western Australia	O'Connor	30/12/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase- protracted approvals process with the relevant statutory departments, DPLH, ALC and the Traditional Owners. 4/4/21 - ALT application lodged , application was considered at the 31/3/22 ALT board meeting, outcome expected to be issued by End Of May. Based on communications with DPLH, lease format will be dependent on ongoing template negotiation with Lawyers. DPLH have confirmed 25/2/22 that template lease negotiations are ongoing. Awaiting Ministers endorsement of ALT board meeting minutes- timing unknown.DPLH delayed issuance of site licence and recently confirmed that they can not issue a licence in the timeframe required. Telstra seeking to deploy a low impact solution to progress works	High risk of Frustration.
MBSP4-VIC-034	Round 4	Shelford	Victoria	Ballarat	30/03/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-VIC-001	Round 5	Aberfeldy	Victoria	Monash	30/06/2024	Y	Site Frustrated, CwltH Notified- replacement site nomination pending	Awaiting State govt approval aspirational forecast date of 12 months from CwltH approval for replacement site
MBSP5-WA-066	Round 5	Abrolhos Islands, East Wallabi Island	Western Australia	Durack	31/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase. There are 3 different Govt Depts DBCA, Dept of Fisheries WA, (under a Management order), Conservation and Parks Commission WA where Telstra are required to seek authority to construct a mobile facility. All endorsements obtained and recent advice from DBCA stated site licence will not be issued until the end of May at earliest.	AAA forecast June 2023

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MBSP5-WA-001	Round 5	Abrolhos Islands, Pelsaert Group	Western Australia	Durack	25/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase. There are 3 different Govt Depts DBCA, Dept of Fisheries WA, (under a Management order), Conservation and Parks Commission WA where Telstra are required to seek authority to construct a mobile facility. Currently progressing execution of site licence.	AAA forecast May 2023
MBSP5-WA-002	Round 5	Abrolhos Islands, Rat Island	Western Australia	Durack	8/09/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase. There are 3 different Govt Depts DBCA, Dept of Fisheries WA, (under a Management order), Conservation and Parks Commission WA where Telstra are required to seek authority to construct a mobile facility. Currently progressing execution of site licence.	AAA forecast May 2023
MBSP5-NSW-001	Round 5	Black Springs	New South Wales	Calare	30/06/2024	N	Site Frustrated awaiting Cwlth	Awaiting Cwlth approval on replacement site - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from Cwlth approval for replacement site
MBSP5-QLD-047	Round 5	Cedar Creek Falls	Queensland	Dawson	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-NSW-004	Round 5	Colo	New South Wales	Macquarie	30/06/2024	N	Site Frustrated awaiting Cwlth	Awaiting Cwlth approval on replacement site - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from Cwlth approval for replacement site
MBSP5-VIC-003	Round 5	Cudgewa	Victoria	Indi	31/05/2023	N	Ongoing delays within the site acquisition phase with regard to obtaining landowner consent with only 1 willing landowner. Landowner pulled out at last moment just after DA was submitted. New candidate being assessed with another landowner. Working with landowner on proposed location and commercials. Delay now is with power company	AAA, delay with power company
MBSP5-QLD-045	Round 5	Diamond Ridge	Queensland	Capricornia	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-WA-017	Round 5	Djugerari Remote Community	Western Australia	Durack	8/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase in seeking a determination from DPLH, now working with Traditional owners to progress all approvals	Current planned AAA forecast is July 2023
MBSP5-QLD-046	Round 5	Duckadang Camp	Queensland	Blair	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-SA-002	Round 5	Farina	South Australia	Grey	17/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays within the site acquisition phase with regard to planning approval. DA required for new structure, keen owner, however Lessee on Crown Land. Lessee can sublease, but requires Ministerial Consent. Ministerial Consent submitted Feb 22. Awaiting consent. 25/7/22 From Dept Energy and Water - proposed tenure in its current form is documented as a sublease with the Crown Lessee, since signing the sublease, the legislation has changed such that the Crown Lessee cannot grant further interests in the land. Meaning that the the Crown Lessees cannot grant a sublease for a telco tower, it needs to be approved by way of a telco facility licence directly with the Crown. 2/8/22 Now requires a new set of agreed commercials, including 5 year licence. PIRSA Pastoral Board awaiting consented to the proposal from Crown lands. 15/8/22 Provided extra info to CL, expect draft offer/licence around end of month. 19/9/22 No update, chasing. 17/10/22 Native title consultation is in process - expect 6+ weeks. 23/11/22 CL still needs Pastoral Board and Native Title consent, slowed due to staff changes. 16/1/23 Following up. 31/1/23 Confirmed land is not under native title, so is progressing. Lawyers liaising. 9/2/23 S22(1) (DEW) has advised the application assessment will be progressed next week, a draft of the change of purpose conditions will be provided to Telstra and the pastoral lessee in due course for comment before the final approval is considered. It will then be referred to Crown Lands to issue the licence. Pastoral Board has cleared it. The next step is to obtain a Crown Licence from the DEW, process initiated 14/3/23.	Current AAA forecast May 23
MBSP5-QLD-044	Round 5	Girraween National Park	Queensland	Maranoa	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-TAS-005	Round 5	Granville Harbour	Tasmania	Braddon	17/10/2023	N	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with Tas Parks with providing all approvals necessary to commence construction. Further delayed by extra request and site movement by Tas Parks. Tas parks to provide consent form to lodge DA to Council- awaiting Tas Parks	Current AAA forecast is Sept 23
MBSP5-WA-024	Round 5	Hamelin Pool	Western Australia	Durack	15/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with Council. The Shark Bay Shire Council is currently in the process of varying the Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme No 4) to allow for the installation of the telecommunications infrastructure. Approved by Minister , gazetted by Council, awaiting for time bars to be completed to allow progression of site licence	AAA forecast June 2023
MBSP5-QLD-043	Round 5	Lake Borumba	Queensland	Wide bay	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-WA-031	Round 5	Lane Poole Reserve	Western Australia	Canning	30/06/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with DBCA with providing all approvals necessary to commence construction. Further delayed by extra request for approvals and assessments by DBCA	AAA forecast June 2023

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MBSP5-QLD-024	Round 5	Lochington State School	Queensland	Flynn	28/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with property approval. Issues with Title/leasing with legal advice it is a Trustee lease (Grazing Homestead Freeholding Lease) and the tenure will be with Crown Lands. Contact from Dept Resources chased the Lochington application, allocated officer to make contact. Dept of resources made contact, have planning pathway to move forward. 25/10/21 meeting with Crown Lands to go through documents before submitting. Crown lands cancelled meeting. finalised documents without meeting. Discussed documentation (2xforms) with new CL contact, provided draft Trustee Lease. Draft lease prepared, application lodged 12/4/22. Requested Letter of Authority from the Trustees to lodge application, (new Club President), received 27/4/22 and sent to Crown lands. 29/4/22 Crown lands provided case ref# 2022/001197. Awaiting Crown lands	Current planned AAA forecast is June 2023
MBSP5-NSW-014	Round 5	Lord Howe	New South Wales	Sydney	30/08/2023	N	Development on the island is restrictive, controlled by the Lord Howe Island Board. Contact made with Board. Some Board members are against the facility. Existing Telstra exchange option presented, owner is against having a new pole on property. Owner becoming unresponsive to calls and letters. Met with new LHIB CEO, pro mobile phones, speciality is community consultation. LHIB meeting of 23/3/22 endorsed moving forward with mobile technology. Have provided more information re proposal. LHIB considering funding a 2nd facility. 6 more LHIB meetings and no decision provided to date.	High chance of Frustration
MBSP5-WA-033	Round 5	Lower Donnelly River Huts	Western Australia	O'Connor	30/06/2023	N	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with DBCA and (Parks and Wildlife) with providing all approvals necessary to commence construction. Further delayed by extra request for approvals and assessments by DBCA	AAA forecast June 2023
MBSP5-WA-069	Round 5	Mount Margaret Community	Western Australia	O'Connor	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-WA-039	Round 5	Muludja Remote Community	Western Australia	Durack	15/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase in seeking a determination from DPLH, now working with Traditional owners to progress all approvals. Traditional owners endorsement required for the issuance of site licence from DPLH	AAA forecast May 2023
MBSP5-VIC-014	Round 5	Myrrhea South	Victoria	Indi	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-WA-042	Round 5	Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Tjukurla	Western Australia	O'Connor	30/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase in seeking a determination from DPLH, now working with Traditional owners to progress all approvals	Current planned AAA forecast is May 2023
MBSP5-QLD-030	Round 5	Petford	Queensland	Kennedy	30/06/2024	Y	Site frustrated awaiting Cwlt	Awaiting Cwlt decision on replacement site - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from Cwlt approval for replacement site
MBSP5-TAS-009	Round 5	Pioneer	Tasmania	Bass	17/08/2023	N	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase. Tas National Parks site. Tas Parks confirmed Planning Pathway 20/8/21. 27/9/21 Planning form finalised and sent for Parks DA consent. 15/11/21 Spoke with Parks, have provided further documents for Property and Planning. DA drafted, to submitted with other documents 22/3/22. Consent to lodge DA and proposed licence expected. 4/4/22 Parks reviewing our application. Contact on leave until 27/4/22. Expect about 3-4m for tenure.	Current planned AAA forecast is August 2023.
MBSP5-QLD-031	Round 5	Portland Roads	Queensland	Leichhardt	30/06/2023	N	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase, property consent- large Solar upgrade required- delays with weather affecting access for Solar upgrade.	Site AAA
MBSP5-NT-009	Round 5	Soudan Station	Northern Territory	Lingiari	15/12/2023	N	land is covered by a Perpetual Pastoral Lease. Station owners very keen. HOTS sent to owners and AAPA certificate requested and granted. Planning completed. No Geotech required. Legals instructed and Sub-sub-lease sent . Once signed needs Ministerial consent. Lease with Landowner's solicitor has become unresponsive. Response from Landowner's rep , no issues with sub-sub-lease. Landowners rep told us a complexity has arisen from their end with the subleases, to respond soon with their position. Still very keen to progress, now working through implications with lawyers/accountant regarding lease structure and tax. Owners response due end of June. Lease agreed awaiting signature, then Ministerial consent required	Current planned AAA forecast is October 2023

MBSP5-QLD-035	Round 5	Stockyard Point	Queensland	Capricornia	30/03/2024	N	<p>Telstra have investigated and exhausted all possible safe options on how this proposed installation could be safely built. The existing structure is not suitable and cannot be used to install our Mobiles infrastructure.</p> <p>From a planning perspective there is Native Title over the land and the land surrounding is all vegetated and State protected. The Property surrounding the proposed site is either Residential or National Park so no other suitable options available away from the contacted location can be achieved. The current site is situated on Crown Land which was originally acquired under a "special Lease", a renewal was granted in 2008 which expires in Dec 2028.</p> <p>The existing structure is currently heavily overloaded as the edge of the cliff creates a Region D+ issue for any build. This facility is currently in service for a Telstra Customer Access Network.</p> <p>Track conditions are very poor with 4WD access only and not suitable for heavy vehicles. We have reached out to QLD Parks s22(duty Ranger) to confirm that the track is NOT on any future plan for any upgrades.</p> <p>On a site visit the team had to resort to using a winch on several occasions to get to the site.</p> <p>The track from Byfield is used by the residents and there are a number of narrow blind corners which presents Zero Harm/HSE concerns for construction and the locals' residents if we were to operate heavy vehicles on the track.</p> <p>There is no beach access from Yeppoon – there are several unfordable creeks cutting the beach.</p> <p>The existing site and surrounds are all rock.</p> <p>Telstra Investigated using a Barge to the beach and a Helicopter lift both these options are cost prohibitive.</p> <p>There has been correspondence from a local stating he already has all the required permits clearances from Crown lands and Native Title approval. Telstra are continuing to work with the locals in progressing the site.</p>	AAA forecast Sept 2023. High risk of Frustration.
MBSP5-NT-011	Round 5	Tara Community	Northern Territory		10/06/2023		Replacement site for Avon Downs. Ongoing delays within the site acquisition phase with regard to obtaining from CLC (central Land Council) and AAPA (Aboriginal Areas protection Authority)	Site AAA. Access roads flooded, no access for equipment required to build.
MBSP5-WA-051	Round 5	Thevenard Island	Western Australia	Durack	31/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase with DPLH with providing all approvals necessary to commence construction. Telstra were Directed to undertake site surveys, under instruction from DPLH, surveys completed at end April 22. Significantly delayed with issuance of site licence and agreement on commercial terms.	High risk of Frustration
MBSP5-NSW-020	Round 5	Upper Cooper Creek	New South Wales	Richmond	30/06/2024	N	Very contentious site, residents do not want tower near school. No responses to phone calls or letters. 2 neighbours now showing interest, but tree heights on property's are concern. Now gauging interest from community, Before prelodgement with Council and seek final agreement from landowner.	Site Frustrated- replacement site nominated - aspirational forecast date of 12 months from Cwlth approval for replacement site
s47G(1)(a)								
MBSP5-WA-056	Round 5	Wangkatjunka Remote Community	Western Australia	Durack	15/08/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase in seeking a determination from DPLH, now working with Traditional owners to progress all approvals. Traditional owners endorsement required for the issuance of site licence from DPLH.	AAA forecast June 2023
MBSP5-TAS-013	Round 5	Woodsdale Exchange	Tasmania	Lyons	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-WA-062	Round 5	Yakanarra	Western Australia	Durack	30/07/2023	Y	Ongoing delays with the acquisition phase in seeking a determination from DPLH, now working with Traditional owners to progress all approvals	Site AAA
MBSP5-QLD-042	Round 5	Yarraden	Queensland	Leichhardt	30/06/2024		Replacement site approved by the Commonwealth	
MBSP5-NSW-024	Round 5	Yarrangobilly Cave	New South Wales	Eden-Monaro	31/11/2023	N	delays with agreeing commercial terms with NSW. Finalising site location and design for NSW approval.	AAA Forecast Nov 2023
MBSP5A-VIC-001	Round 5a	Anglers Rest	Victoria	Gippsland	7/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-NSW-027	Round 5a	Barrier Creek Highway - Barrier Highway (Between Broken Hill and Little Topar Hotel)	New South Wales	Parkes	29/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-NSW-029	Round 5a	Barrier Highway -Barrier Highway (Between Canbelego and Hermindale)	New South Wales	Parkes	29/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	

MBSP5A-NSW-008	Round 5a	Biala	New South Wales	Hume	14/10/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-TAS-002	Round 5a	Bridgenorth	Tasmania	Bass	29/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by theTas State Govt for a futher 4 months.
MBSP5A-SA-002	Round 5a	Brooker	South Australia	Grey	14/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the SA State Govt for a futher 3 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-009	Round 5a	Bukkulla	New South Wales	New England	31/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-010	Round 5a	Burruga	New South Wales	Calare	29/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-011	Round 5a	Burragate	New South Wales	Eden-Monaro	28/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-VIC-002	Round 5a	Burrowwye	Victoria	Indi	2/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-012	Round 5a	Carabost	New South Wales	Farrer	16/06/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-WA-010	Round 5a	Cascade North	Western Australia	O'Connor	9/06/2023	Y	Power Company delays- radio TX equipment delays
MBSP5A-SA-003	Round 5a	Cherry Gardens	South Australia	Mayo	4/09/2023	Y	Delays with final approvals from NBN
MBSP5A-WA-012	Round 5a	Embulgan	Western Australia	Durack	14/08/2023	Y	Delayed with land owner consent
MBSP5A-NSW-013	Round 5a	Ewingar	New South Wales	Page	13/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-VIC-003	Round 5a	Frenchman Gap	Victoria	Indi	2/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-024	Round 5a	Garrawarra Farm	New South Wales	Cunningham		Y	Site Frustrated, Cwlth Notified- replacement site nomination pending
MBSP5A-NSW-026	Round 5a	Glen Elgin	New South Wales	New England	3/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-028	Round 5a	Glenora Barrier Highway	New South Wales	Parkes	14/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-VIC-004	Round 5a	Goongerah	Victoria	Gippsland	13/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-VIC-007	Round 5a	Heathcote	Victoria	Bendigo	28/08/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-014	Round 5a	Hermidale	New South Wales	Parkes	30/05/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-WA-011	Round 5a	Hyden East	Western Australia	O'Connor	9/06/2023	Y	radio TX equipment delays
MBSP5A-WA-009	Round 5a	Indian Ocean Dr / Coolimba-Eneabba Rd	Western Australia	Durack	30/04/2024	Y	Site area has many enviromental overlays and challenges. Council have raised concerns of height of structure in coastal view corridor. DA will be required
MBSP5A-WA-008	Round 5a	Indian Ocean Dr/ Cliffhead Campsite	Western Australia	Durack	30/04/2024	Y	Site area has many enviromental overlays and challenges. Council have raised concerns of height of structure in coastal view corridor. DA will be required
MBSP5A-WA-007	Round 5a	Indian Ocean Drive - Cliffhead	Western Australia	Durack	30/04/2024	Y	Site area has many enviromental overlays and challenges. Council have raised concerns of height of structure in coastal view corridor. DA will be required
MBSP5A-WA-014	Round 5a	Kadjina	Western Australia	Durack	14/08/2023	Y	Delayed with land owner consent
MBSP5A-VIC-005	Round 5a	Koetong	Victoria	Indi	3/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-015	Round 5a	Kosciuszko Tourist Park	New South Wales	Eden-Monaro	18/11/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-TAS-001	Round 5a	Liena	Tasmania	Lyons	21/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-016	Round 5a	Little Topar	New South Wales	Parkes	13/11/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-007	Round 5a	Lower Macdonald	New South Wales	Macquarie	1/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-017	Round 5a	Malabugilmah	New South Wales	Page	28/08/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-018	Round 5a	Maragle	New South Wales	Eden-Monaro	30/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-030	Round 5a	Miandetta Barrier Highway	New South Wales	Parkes	27/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-019	Round 5a	Millbank	New South Wales	Cowper	3/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.
MBSP5A-NSW-025	Round 5a	Mole River Exchange	New South Wales	New England	21/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.

MBSP5A-VIC-006	Round 5a	Monaro Highway	Victoria	Gippsland		Y	Site Frustrated, Cwlth Notified- replacement site nomination pending	
MBSP5A-SA-001	Round 5a	Mosely	South Australia	Grey	15/06/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the SA State Govt for a futher 3 months.	
MBSP5A-WA-006	Round 5a	North Greenbushes	Western Australia	O'Connor	10/07/2023	Y	delays with NBN final approvals	
MBSP5A-VIC-008	Round 5a	Pheasant Hill	Victoria	Gippsland	6/11/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-VIC-009	Round 5a	Tawonga	Victoria	Indi	10/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-NSW-020	Round 5a	Tenterfield	New South Wales	New England	30/06/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-WA-013	Round 5a	Tunney North	Western Australia	O'Connor	5/06/2023	Y	radio TX equipment delays	
MBSP5A-VIC-010	Round 5a	W Tree Creek	Victoria	Gippsland	12/09/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the Vic State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-NSW-021	Round 5a	Watsons Creek	New South Wales	New England	28/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-NSW-022	Round 5a	Wolgan Valley	New South Wales	Calare		Y	Site Frustrated, Cwlth Notified- replacement site nomination pending	
MBSP5A-NSW-023	Round 5a	Woods Reef Exchange	New South Wales	New England	28/07/2023	Y	Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSP5A-QLD-009	Round 5a	Yarrill Creek	Queensland	Maranoa	30/06/2023		Delay in contract execution with Cwlth and exacerbated by the NSW State Govt for a futher 7 months.	
MBSPPL-NSW-03	Round PL	Brooklyn/Dangar Island	New South Wales	Berowra	30/12/2023		The acquisition team has expended significant effort and experienced significant delay attempting to find a viable candidate and willing property consent. Council approved DA. An independent Planning tribunal reviewed with determination provided end of June 2022. Awaiting Final execution of all agreed documents.	Current AAA forecast 28/7/22
MBSPPL-NSW-15	Round PL	Kangaroo Valley	New South Wales	Gilmore			Frustrated site	Frustrated, Cwlth Notified, no replacement site to be nominated
MBSPPL-NSW-16	Round PL	Killcare	New South Wales	Robertson	30/12/2023		Optus lead site- awaiting advice from Optus on their next steps. Site subject to a FOI request- and current legal action.	No current AAA plan

Site Name	MBSP ID	Round	Carrier	State	Electorate	Reason for delay	Has AAA been achieved Yes/No?	If No, when is AAA forecast (month/year)	Forecast SOA / Requested Extension	Site status - as per EoT request
Girard Hill Top	MBSP-NSW-150	Round 1	TPGT	NSW	New England	Replacement site - Co-location - Original site was Mount Carrington. Site is a co-location on an existing NSW Telco Authority tower. Tower strengthening redesign was required this took an extraordinary amount of time by FEC. Long delay on the HV power approval and connection.	No	Q3 2023	Q4, 2023	Going through co location process. AAA process needed to restart due age duration
Manna Mountain	MBSP-NSW-081	Round 1	TPGT	NSW	Parkes	Site Acquisition - Co-location - Initial delays were due to protracted property negotiations with NSW Forestry Corporation regarding lease agreement for original site. TPGT moved to an adjacent Essential Energy tower 350 metres away. Delays with co-location approvals and processes. Co-location was approved in July 2020. Current delay is due to Essential Energy asking for higher rental costs than TPGT originally negotiated. TPGT are not willing to pay the prohibitive rental cost. LAAN has now been served on Essential Energy and an objection received. Now in consultation with Essential Energy working towards an outcome. Additional tower strengthening works are likely required to access structure. Access track upgrade works have been agreed and approved by Forestry corp.	No	Q3, 2023	Q4, 2023	In escalated negotiations after LAAN was objected to.
Doughboy Mountain	MBSP2-NSW-037	Round 2	TPGT	NSW	New England	Site integration pending, completion of Mount Hourigan transmission path.	Yes	NA	Q4, 2023	Awaiting Mount Hourigan completion for TX path.
Mount Hourigan	MBSP2-NSW-001	Round 2	TPGT	NSW	New England	Co-location - Power - Weather - Delay due to re-design for co-location. NSW Telco are joining the site. This has delayed the completion of power works and power connection by Essential Energy. Wet weather has hampered access to the site to complete build. Access track to site was flooded which had to be repaired before build could be re-started. This has delayed the completion of the build.	Yes	NA	Q4, 2023	Site partially constructed. Waiting for power connection.



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway

MS23-003499

Mr Andrew Roberts
Chief Executive Officer
Field Solutions Group
38/23 Narabang Way
BELROSE NSW 2085

Dear Mr Roberts

The Australian Government is committed to ongoing investment in improving regional telecommunications services across Australia and recognises the important role telecommunications companies, such as Field Solutions Group (FSG), contribute to achieving this outcome.

As you are aware, the Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia (the Plan) is a key part of the Government's \$2.2 billion commitment to improving mobile and broadband connectivity to regional, rural and remote parts of the country. The Plan includes \$400 million dedicated to boosting mobile coverage and resilience and \$200 million towards further rounds of the Regional Connectivity Program (RCP). The Government opened the RCP Round 3 (with Mobile Black Spot (Round 7) opportunities) on 20 March 2023 and is calling for applications from the industry. I encourage FSG to work with the states, territories, local governments and communities to put forward proposals under this grant opportunity. Applications close on 12 July 2023.

In June 2022, I agreed to a request from FSG to an extension of time (EOT) for ^{s47G(1)(a)} base stations funded under Round 5 of the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) experiencing delays. ^{s47G(1)(a)}

I acknowledge FSG's support and contribution to date to the MBSP and RCP, particularly under the challenging circumstances over the past 12 months with severe weather events, natural disasters and supply chain disruptions. However, it remains a priority for the Government that mobile base stations funded under existing rounds of the MBSP are delivered over the next 12 months.

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
PO Box 6022, Parliament House Canberra
Suite 101C, 130 Main Street, Blacktown NSW 2148 | (02) 9671 4780

To facilitate this, I have agreed to a 12-month EOT requested by FSG for up to ^{s47}_{G(1)} base stations funded under Round 5A of the MBSP (at Attachment A), which have experienced delays and are not expected to be completed by 30 June 2023.

I understand that building mobile infrastructure in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia can be complex and challenging, whereby factors such as obtaining landowner agreement, state and territory planning approvals, and receiving support from parks and power authorities is typically outside FSG's direct control.

I seek your support in ensuring that FSG directs sufficient attention and resources to the MBSP so that these delayed base stations are delivered over the course of the next 12 months. I also ask that FSG report back to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (my department) by 31 January 2024 with an update on the rollout status for these EOT sites, including a clear statement on the expected completion date for any uncompleted sites, and FSG's plans for sites that are forecast to experience further delays or likely to be frustrated. The contact at my department is ^{s22(1)(a)} _(b) Director, Mobile Programs Implementation at ^{s22(1)(a)(ii)} _(i) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto: @infrastructure.gov.au).⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

For any sites not completed by 31 January 2024, I would expect them to have at least achieved Acquisition, Access and Approval (AAA) status by that time, or FSG be able to clearly demonstrate that AAA status can be achieved in a timeframe that would allow for any outstanding sites to be completed by 30 June 2024. I am unlikely to consider favourably any further EOT requests beyond June 2024 for sites that do not have a clear pathway forward to completion.

Improving digital connectivity is a high priority for the Government, and I look forward to working closely with FSG on neutral host and multi-carrier solutions to continue to provide people living, working and travelling in regional, rural and remote Australia with better access to more reliable and affordable telecommunications services.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Rowland MP

22/6/2023

Enc



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

**Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway**

MS23-003499

Mr Iñaki Berroeta
Chief Executive Officer
TPG Telecom
177 Pacific Highway
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 3060

Dear Mr Berroeta

The Australian Government is committed to ongoing investment in improving regional telecommunications services across Australia and recognises the important collaborative role Mobile Network Operators, such as TPG Telecom (TPG), contribute to achieving this outcome.

As you are aware, the Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia (the Plan) is a key part of the Government's \$2.2 billion commitment to improving mobile and broadband connectivity in regional, rural and remote parts of the country. The Plan includes \$400 million dedicated to boosting mobile coverage and resilience and \$200 million towards further rounds of the Regional Connectivity Program (RCP). The Government opened the RCP Round 3 (with Mobile Black Spot (Round 7) opportunities) on 20 March 2023 and is calling for applications from the industry. I encourage TPG to work with the states, territories, local governments and communities to put forward proposals under this grant opportunity. Applications close on 12 July 2023.

In June 2022, I agreed to a request from TPG to an extension of time (EOT) for four Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) base stations funded under Rounds 1 and 2 experiencing delays. I am advised that these four base stations are yet to be completed and that TPG has requested a further EOT to complete these sites.

I acknowledge TPG's support and contribution to date to the MBSP, particularly under the challenging circumstances over the past 12 months in completing these last four sites due to severe weather events and delays in obtaining the required power and co-location approvals. However, it remains a priority for the Government that mobile base stations funded under existing rounds of the MBSP are delivered over the next 12 months.

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
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To facilitate this, I have agreed to a further EOT of up to 12-months to allow TPG to complete these remaining four sites (at [Attachment A](#)), which have experienced continued delays and are not expected to be completed by 30 June 2023, with an understanding that the power, co-location and approval issues have now been resolved and all four sites are forecast to be completed by end December 2023, or no later than 30 June 2024.

I understand that building mobile infrastructure in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia can be complex and challenging, whereby factors such as obtaining landowner agreement, state and territory planning approvals, and receiving support from parks and power authorities is typically outside TPG's direct control.

I seek your support in ensuring that TPG directs sufficient attention and resources to the completion of these remaining four base stations, including the extended back up battery requirements funded under the Mobile Network Hardening Program, and that TPG report back to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (my department) by 31 January 2024 with an update on the status of these EOT sites. The contact at my department is [s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Director, Mobile Programs Implementation at [s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\).@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii).@infrastructure.gov.au).

For any of these four sites not completed by 31 January 2024, I would expect TPG be able to clearly demonstrate that those sites have a clear pathway to completion by 30 June 2024. I am unlikely to consider favourably any further EOT requests beyond June 2024 for sites that do not have a clear pathway forward to being delivered.

Improving digital connectivity is a high priority for the Government and I look forward to working closely with TPG to continue to provide people living, working and travelling in regional, rural and remote Australia with better access to more reliable and affordable telecommunications services

Yours sincerely



Michelle Rowland MP

22 / 6 / 2023

Enc

Attachment A

TPG Rounds 1 and 2 sites granted an extension of time

Site Name	MBSP ID	Round	State	Reason for delay	Forecast SOA / Requested Extension
Girard Hill Top	MBSP-NSW-150	Round 1	NSW	Replacement site - Co-location - Original site was Mount Carrington. Site is a co-location on an existing NSW Telco Authority tower. Tower strengthening redesign was required this took an extraordinary amount of time by FEC. Long delay on the HV power approval and connection.	Q4, 2023
Manna Mountain	MBSP-NSW-081	Round 1	NSW	Site Acquisition - Co-location - Initial delays were due to protracted property negotiations with NSW Forestry Corporation regarding lease agreement for original site. TPGT moved to an adjacent Essential Energy tower 350 metres away. Delays with co-location approvals and processes. Co-location was approved in July 2020. Current delay is due to Essential Energy asking for higher rental costs than TPGT originally negotiated. TPGT are not willing to pay the prohibitive rental cost. LAAN has now been served on Essential Energy and an objection received. Now in consultation with Essential Energy working towards an outcome. Additional tower strengthening works are likely required to access structure. Access track upgrade works have been agreed and approved by Forestry corp.	Q4, 2023
Doughboy Mountain	MBSP2-NSW-037	Round 2	NSW	Site integration pending, completion of Mount Hourigan transmission path.	Q4, 2023
Mount Hourigan	MBSP2-NSW-001	Round 2	NSW	Co-location - Power - Weather - Delay due to re-design for co-location. NSW Telco are joining the site. This has delayed the completion of power works and power connection by Essential Energy. Wet weather has hampered access to the site to complete build. Access track to site was flooded which had to be repaired before build could be re-started. This has delayed the completion of the build.	Q4, 2023



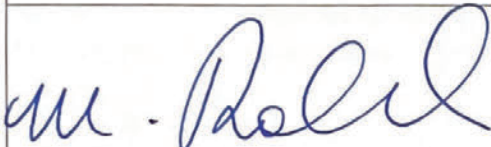
Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

To: The Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications (for decision)

Subject: Reallocation of funds from the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) Program to the Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation (TDRI) Program.

Critical Date: Please action by Friday 30 June 2023 in order to meet end of financial year deadlines.

Recommendation:	
1. That you agree to reallocate a \$402,000 underspend in the 2022-23 Financial Year from the STAND Program to the TDRI Program under the Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia.	
	Agreed / Not Agreed
 The Hon Michelle Rowland MP	
	29/6/23 Date:
Comments:	

Key Points:

- Under the STAND Program, NBN Co was awarded an ad-hoc grant valued at \$7.0 million (GST excl.) to install up to 2,000 NBN Sky Muster satellite services at evacuation centres and other emergency service depots at locations nominated by state and territory governments. 1,068 nominations were received by NBN Co, with the installation of these satellite services being completed on 29 December 2022.
- Of the \$7.0 million grant awarded, NBN Co claimed \$6,230,931 (GST excl.). This resulted in an underspend of \$769,069 (GST excl.) under the STAND program for the 2022-23 Financial Year. Of this underspend, \$366,500 was used to offset other spending measures within the portfolio (additional funding for BetStop and ACMA dis/misinformation regulation), leaving an underspend of \$402,000 within the STAND Program.
- We propose that this underspend be reallocated to the TDRI program, which would bring the total funding allocated for the TDRI Program from 2022-23 to 2024-25 to \$50.4 million (GST excl.). This reallocation is appropriate given the primary objectives of the two programs (i.e. to improve the disaster resilience of telecommunications) are shared.

4. Under the Budget Process Operational Rules, administered funding reallocations within a CBMS program within a financial year (such as in this case) are at your discretion as the portfolio Minister.

Financial impacts: If the reallocation is agreed, note that the \$402,000 (GST excl.) will subsequently need to undergo a Movement of Funds (MoF) process in order to be available for the TDRI program in the 2023-24 or 2024-25 Financial Years. Your approval for a formal MoF request with the Department of Finance will be sought separately as part of the MYEFO MoF process to be conducted later this year.

Legal/Legislative impacts: N/A

Stakeholder Implications: Stakeholders would likely welcome an increase in the funding made available for the TDRI Program.

Consultation: External Budgets and Communications Services and Consumer Division

Media Opportunities: N/A

Cleared By: Kate McMullan
Position: Assistant Secretary
Division: Communications Infrastructure Division
Telecommunications Resilience Branch
Ph: (02) 6271 s22(1)(a)(ii)
Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Cleared Date:

Contact Officer: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Section: Telecommunications Disaster Resilience
Ph: (02) 6271 s22(1)(a)(ii)

Instructions for MPS: Nil

Responsible Adviser: s22(1)(a)(ii)

PDMS Distribution List: Jim Betts, Richard Windeyer, Matthew Brine, Kate McMullan, Karly Pidgeon, s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a)(ii)