

Mobile Black Spot Programme (Programme) – Clarification No.1 [23 February 2015] additional clarification of eligible locations

1. Clarification of ‘Eligible Locations’

Clause 2.2.3 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme Guidelines (the Guidelines) states:

*To be eligible for consideration for funding under the Programme, a new or upgraded **Proposed Base Station** must deliver improved mobile coverage to an area identified in the **Database of Reported Locations**.*

The term, “Database of Reported Locations” is defined in Part F- Glossary to the Guidelines as:

The database from which eligible applicants must select the locations for which they intend to apply for funding under the Programme.

This database is available as a downloadable spreadsheet and interactive map on the Department of Communications’ website at www.communications.gov.au. A Google Earth file of the latest version of the database is also being made available to eligible organisations that register with the Department to receive the application documentation for the Programme.

In response to queries received, we provide the following clarification in respect of Eligible Locations:

- Under the Programme funding is available for a base station which delivers new or improved coverage to all or part of a location included in the Database of Reported Locations (“Reported Locations”).
- If an area served by a base station is at a Reported Location, then the base station is eligible to receive funding under the Programme – that is, it meets the requirement that, to receive funding, a base station must deliver new or improved coverage to a Reported Location.
- Of course, to receive funding the base station must meet other requirements as well – for example, it must not be located in an ineligible area.
- Ineligible areas for the Programme are those which have existing Handheld Coverage; are within a Major Urban Centre; or are part of the applicant’s 2014-17 forward build plan (see clause 2.2.4 of the Guidelines).
- While the Department of Communications has prepared a map which shows Reported Locations, and marks each one with a pin on the map, the location of the pin is indicative – it is not determinative for the purpose of identifying whether a particular base station delivers coverage to a Reported Location.
- The test of whether a proposed base station is eligible for funding is not:
 - Whether the area that will receive coverage from the base station is at a location with the precise coordinates of a pin on the map prepared by the Department of Communications; nor
 - Whether the base station will be located at a location with the precise coordinates of a pin on the map prepared by the Department of Communications.

- Rather, the test of whether a proposed base station is eligible for funding is whether the area to receive coverage from the base station includes all or part of a Reported Location (having regard to the ordinary understanding in the community of the area comprising the Reported Location).

Example 1:

Town A has been reported to the Department of Communications (Department) as having poor or no mobile coverage. For the purposes of depicting the location of Town A in the database, its location has been represented by a “pin” marker placed in the centre of Town A.

In analysing the availability of existing mobile coverage, an applicant identifies that the precise location where the pin has been placed (the latitude/longitude) has existing Handheld Coverage. However, there are areas surrounding Town A with patchy coverage (outside existing Handheld Coverage as defined in the Guidelines) and some outlying areas have no coverage at all.

A new or upgraded base station proposing to provide new handheld coverage to one or more of these areas (i.e. within the “broad geographic area” of Town A) would be considered to be an “Eligible Location” for the purpose of funding under the Programme.

Example 2:

A stretch of Highway B has been reported to the Department as having poor or no mobile coverage. For the purposes of depicting the location of this stretch of Highway B in the database, its location has been represented by a pin marker placed approximately half way along the reported stretch of Highway B.

In analysing the availability of existing coverage, an applicant identifies that the precise location where the pin has been placed on the database (the latitude/longitude) has existing Handheld Coverage from one or more carriers. However, there are areas along the reported stretch of Highway B with patchy coverage (outside the Handheld Coverage footprint) and some areas have no mobile coverage at all.

A new or upgraded base station proposing to provide new handheld coverage anywhere along this stretch of highway (i.e. the “broad geographic area” of the reported stretch of Highway B) would be considered to be an “Eligible Location” for the purposes of funding under the Programme.