

Coalition Senators' Dissenting Report

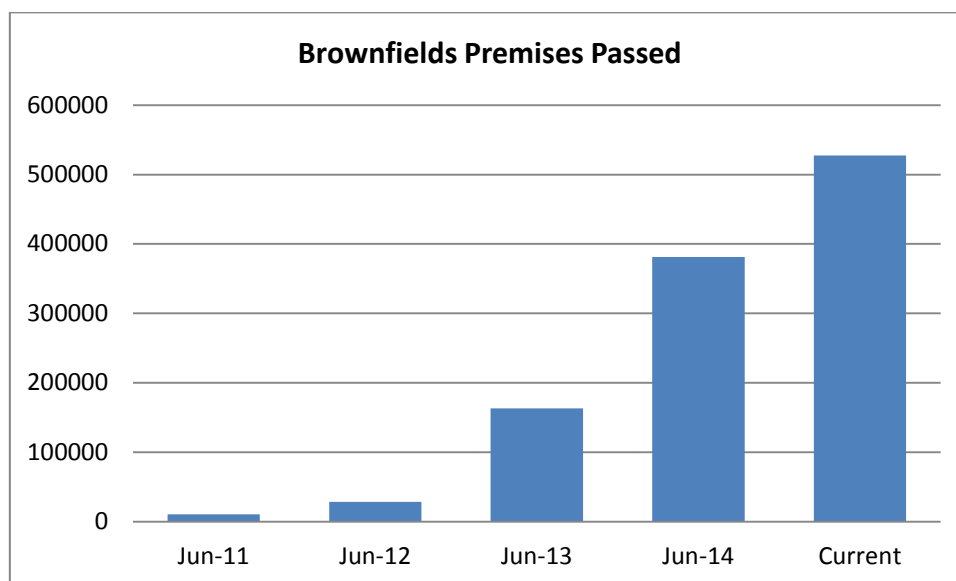
Coalition Senators are disappointed by the conduct of this committee and consider this interim report does not accurately reflect the current status of the NBN rollout.

The conduct of the committee has been an abuse of the Senate's power. The behaviour of some committee members has been calculated to bully and intimidate key NBN Co executives, and undermine the NBN's capacity to deliver on its operational targets.

Since November 2013, the committee has called 22 hearings. NBN executives have been demanded to appear before the committee for a total of 272 hours. By contrast, the Joint NBN Committee of the previous Parliament called NBN executives to appear for a combined total of 39 hours through eight hearings.

It is apparent the committee was established for the sole purpose of making rhetorical political points which have no basis in reality. Assertions that the NBN is missing operational targets, that the NBN has become more secretive rather than less, and that the multi-technology mix will not deliver the benefits to the digital economy are not based in fact. This has been demonstrated through key studies—chief of which was the Cost-Benefit Analysis—and international deployments.

Reforms made to the company have delivered obvious benefits, as demonstrated by the number of premises now passed by the NBN Co's fixed line and fixed wireless networks:



The Senate Select Committee's earlier interim report was devoid of objective findings, as was comprehensively demonstrated in a detailed point-by-point rebuttal issued by the Minister for Communications on 2 May 2014.

This latest committee interim report does not credibly respond to any of the detailed points in the Minister's rebuttal and is completely at odds with the evidence provided by NBN Co at the numerous hearings.

Coalition Committee members consider the work of this committee adds nothing to the Senate's understanding of communications policy, and effectively constitutes an abuse of the Senate committee system. Coalition Senators therefore conclude the committee should be wound up.

Recommendation 1

That the Senate Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network be dissolved and a new, properly constituted Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network be formed as existed in the previous Parliament.

Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO
Deputy Chair
Liberal Senator for NSW

Senator Anne Ruston
Liberal Senator for SA

Senator Dean Smith
Liberal Senator for WA