

Dear Committee Members,

It's January 2020, we live in the Metropolitan area of Adelaide, a 20 minute bicycle ride from the CDB and 4 months ago our premises was shoved (back) onto Skymuster.

We are now on the 3rd technology change for our premises since the "Fast, Affordable, Sooner" Multi Technology Mix was introduced after the 2013 election.

Our premises has been put (back) into the "too hard" basket and, in order to meet the Statement of Expectations, we have been shoved onto a technology type that:

1. NBN's Chief Technology Officer (Peter Ryan) states must be preserved for Rural and Regional Australia and not to be used for premises in locations (Outer Metropolitan) such as ours.
(<https://www.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/the-realities-of-deploying-ftp-in-australia>)
2. We are unable to connect to due to no Line of Sight to either satellite due to geography and trees blocking the signal.

To rub salt into the wound, as all the other premises around our area are on FttN/VDSL, NBN are going to ensure our existing ADSL service (which shares the same copper bundle) is ultimately turned off. We know NBN are going to ensure our ADSL is turned off as NBN provided a statement to that effect on 1 August 2017 to the last Joint Standing Committee:

ADSL services and our services using VDSL technology can interfere with each other to a certain degree and take the speeds down a little bit. Hence, any area that's going to have VDSL needs to have all of that ADSL service ultimately turned off, which is typically after the 18-month disconnect window. So there is a rare circumstance where a home that is served by satellite, while the majority of the 400,000 can still elect to stay on the ADSL through the Telstra network if it's available there, these few will not be able to. (Page 50:

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/commint/be5b2953-7402-482b-8728-fa9a9c888ff7/toc_pdf/Joint%20Standing%20Committee%20on%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Network_2017_08_01_5304_Official.pdf)

NBN are trying to whitewash us by telling us "it's a commercial decision" for other companies to switch off their ADSL, when, in reality NBN are ensuring (and need to ensure for FttN to work properly!) ADSL is switched off in any area where FttN is being used.

Back to our 3rd technology change....

Initially we were slated to receive FttP, construction was due to commence in Feb 2013, but due to the Telstra Asbestos issue, construction across the whole NBN was halted.

The 2013 election followed and after that no new build contracts were released until the Strategic review was completed and the decision made to change to the MtM NBN.

As part of the MtM our (Metropolitan) premises were shoved onto Skymuster. This was technology change #1 (FttP to Skymuster).

We remained mapped for Skymuster for over 2 years, during which time many discussion and emails were had with NBN, and submissions made to various Parliamentary Committees. All of which detailed our plight that boiled down to: Our ADSL would be disconnected due to frequency interference and we can't receive a Satellite signal due to geography and flora.

On 24 July 2017 NBN advised me via phone call they had made a decision that they could build an extra micronode to provide a FttN service to our premises instead of putting our premises on Skymuster. This was technology change #2 (Skymuster to FttN)

Their decision was advised to me just 3 weeks after Peter Ryan had blogged on NBN's website that Outer Metro premises can't "simply be shoved onto the Skymuster satellite service"* and about 1 week prior to NBN's CEO testifying to the Joint Committee: *"So there is a rare circumstance where a home that is served by satellite, while the majority of the 400,000 can still elect to stay on the ADSL through the Telstra network if it's available there, these few will not be able to. That's where we are looking to see if that's reasonable and fair, and what the other options are. We look at the micronodes. What if we put a different micronode in there? What if we use some FTTC, in that example?"*

It was during this phone call on 24 July 2017 that I was advised we should be able to connect to a FttN service by the end of 2017.

2018 rolled around and the construction start date had been pushed back. Every few months I checked NBN's website to see when construction would start. I had faint hope in late 2018 it would be soon, as I stopped and talked to an NBN employee on our road who was scoping out where the conduit (to connect the new micronode) was going to be placed and the exact location of where the new micronode was to be installed. He was very helpful and willing to discuss the upcoming works. He explained in some detail the only issue he had come across during the scoping works, that of a blocked conduit further up the road that would need some clearing/cleaning out before hauling could start.

By mid-2019, the construction dates had been pushed out again and again on NBN's website. We were now looking at Apr-Jun 2020. That was until early Sept 2019, when upon checking the NBN website, we discovered we have been shoved onto Skymuster. Again.

* - <https://www.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/the-realities-of-deploying-ftp-in-australia> The Committee may also be interested in a recent FOI published on the Right to Know Website where NBN discloses that are over 1000 premises within 25km of each Capital City's GPO that are shoved onto Skymuster. So much for preserving Skymuster for Rural and Regional Australia!
<https://www.righttoknow.org.au/request/5894/response/16335/attach/html/4/05A.Final%20FOI%20Decision.pdf.html>

This now bring us up to technology change # 3.

I called and emailed NBN about shoving us back onto a service that Senior NBN staff don't believe should be deployed in our area and should be reserved for Rural and Regional Australia.

NBN's response?

They (allegedly) found some rock in the ground that would increase the cost of civil works.

Rock. In. The. Ground

Never mind the fact NBN blogged several times about how they can easily overcome rock during the rollout:

<https://www.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/tough-torque-in-the-adelaide-hills> ;

<https://www2.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/hard-rock-rollout-in-the-perth-hills> ;

<https://www2.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/rock-and-rollout-at-the-granite-belt>

Or the fact that no ground was broken along our road (no digging started) and NBN admit they don't know what is under the surface until they break ground.

(<https://www2.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/rock-and-rollout-at-the-granite-belt>, "you are unable to see what lies beneath the surface until the ground is broken")

Or even the fact geological records along our road show:

1. The type of rock found along our road is among the softest in existence. (Clay/Slate/Shale)*
2. There is < 10% outcropping of rock on our road*
3. The average depth to rock is 100-150cm on our road*, much deeper than NBN's own requirement of 45cm on a verge (where any trench for the micronode's fibre would have been placed)**
4. NBN has somehow managed to trench for over 1km on the road opposite ours (same geology) and install a micronode***. Trenching required along our road is ~400m.

* - <http://spatialwebapps.environment.sa.gov.au/naturemaps/?locale=en-us&viewer=naturemaps>

** - <https://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/nbn%20Lead-in%20Trenching%20Requirements%20V2%201.pdf>

*** - (installed outside 255 Sheoak Rd) The geology of our two hills are exactly the same, yet there was no rockbed issue found there. It should be mentioned that despite all the expense of trenching and installing this particular micronode, this micronode connects exactly ZERO premises to the NBN network. All the nearby premises within a kilometer either side have been shoved on Skymuster.

No, much easier to just say there is rock and it'll cost too much to connect you.

NBN are telling us:

We are just going to shove you back onto Skymuster, and we will ensure your ADSL will be disconnected as it will interfere with our VDSL signals. (But we will continue to peddle the "it's a commercial decision for the ADSL supplier" line). You are going to be forced onto a service our Chief Network Engineering Officer doesn't think is appropriate for your area. Never mind you can't even connect to it because you don't even have of Line of Sight to either satellite.

No, to put you onto a fixed line service will cost too much. It would be outside the budget for a per premises connection cost.

What's that? We also told you it would cost \$150,000 to connect your 14 premises to FttC? That's just over \$10,000 each! No, too expensive. Never mind we bragged about spending \$120,000 to connect 3 premises in the media*.

* - <https://www.crikey.com.au/2016/03/23/nbn-wont-be-caught-with-pants-down-if-labor-switches-back-to-fibre/>

*On the tour, journalists were shown examples of how NBN deals with different terrains and scenarios. For example, in a set of three premises on Double Jump Road in Mount Cotton, to service three premises, NBN would have had to spend \$200,000 in order to power a node to the location. **Instead NBN is spending \$120,000 to build fibre to the premises for all three.** NBN staff in the area indicated that despite this high cost, the remaining area — filled with all FttP premises — would still come within the company's expected budget. (The article states the remaining area is filled with FttP, but this is incorrect. NBN's maps show the surrounding area is filled with FttN)*

Sorry, the cynic in me has started to pop out. We are over it. Having endured 3 technology changes since my 7yo was born and we still can't connect to the NBN is beyond ridiculous.

To be given some hope that this saga would end and be led along for years with public statements by NBN such as "we'll look at what is fair and reasonable in these circumstances" and "outer metro premises can't simply be shoved onto Skymuster" and NBN *literally bragging* about how they have spent \$120,000 to connect 3 premises only to be privately told by NBN it's "too expensive to connect you now" is too much.

NBN have also gone from advising me "*our field engineers may have installed a separate cable to service our FTTN further down your road to overcome the interference issues that would have occurred from the end of co-existence (in July 2020). We're getting our field engineers to check the work that's occurred in that service area. If that extra cable hasn't been installed, we will go back to the drawing board because obviously its within all our interests to have a solution in place before the end of co-existence.*" to "our engineers don't believe there is any interference issue and in any event the ADSL is being switched off as a commercial decision by Telstra". When NBN were advised (again) that my ADSL service is an exchange based ULLS ADSL service *not supplied by Telstra*. They went quiet. They have not provided a response to "what is going to happen the interference issue" since then. That was two months ago now.

Maybe writing this last submission might get some more action? Maybe not. It is 2020, we have gone through 3 tech changes and still can't connect to the NBN. We are past the point of caring now. Given all the publicised issues with FttN and the NBN in general*, we appear to be better off not connecting to the NBN. We'll need to continue to use our ADSL** until NBN forcibly disconnect it***. NBN certainly won't release any useful information that is pertinent to our circumstance, FOI is useless (hiding behind commercial carve out exemptions), and we'll never see NBN proactively releasing anything that goes against their public statements. Maybe the Committee can ask for documents relevant to our case? I'd love to read the detailed scoping report that shows all this extensive rock on our road that prevents NBN for putting in a micronode. I have good reason to believe it (the rock or the detailed scoping report!) doesn't exist.

* - Poor evening speeds, premises unable to achieve the minimum speed, not meeting appointments etc etc

** - The Sth Aust Virtual Power Plan program requires a fixed line internet connection.

*** - either by "privately encouraging" the ADSL companies to cease sale so NBN can say it was their commercial decision or by NBN just breaching their requirements under Comms Alliance Code C658:2019 Section 4.3.1 where NBN is obliged to not cause interference within a shared cable bundle to a legacy ADSL system.

To finish on a bright note, I spoke to a wireless ISP sometime ago and got them in touch with a tower owner nearby. They have since connected a fantastic service for us that connects us (and can connect all the affected premises on my road) with fast broadband.

The cynic in me thinks once NBN found out about this wireless service was up and running, NBN decided to shove us back onto Skymuster. This wireless service has the capability to provide broadband speeds NBN don't (and can't!) even offer at a price below any comparable NBN plan (on any technology type).

If NBN just can't compete with them (either on attainable speed or price), why would NBN spend \$\$ putting in a micronode to service our affected premises now? Much easier to shove us back onto Skymuster and declare "job done, you meet the Statement of Expectations" knowing that (apart from physically being unable to connect), we now just wouldn't bother to connect.