

Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network
Answers to Questions on Notice
Public Hearing 30 October 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 19

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Wholesale Broadband Agreement

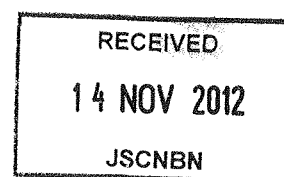
The Committee asked:

Has the NBN Co now finalised its WBA? If so, are there any Retail Service Providers that have agreed to extend the term of the WBA beyond 12 months?

Answer:

NBN Co is planning to finalise its next Wholesale Broadband Agreement (WBA) at the end of November 2012. The next WBA will be available for execution by customers when the Special Access Undertaking (SAU) has been accepted, and will have a term of 2 years. Having the next WBA finalised shortly will give NBN Co and its customers certainty to prepare for its implementation, and also facilitate the SAU assessment process (as the SAU, once accepted, and the next WBA, will operate together).

The majority of customers have now extended the current WBA, until the earlier of 30 April 2013 or a month after the SAU is accepted. Only a couple of customers are yet to return the extension documentation to NBN Co, but are expected to do so shortly.



@1.52 pm

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Question No: 23

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Transition from Copper Services to the NBN– Community consultation/education

The Committee asked:

What are the options for households that do not elect to have an NBN connection for internet, but would like to retain a fixed line phone service?

Answer:

RSPs are able to offer voice-only services on the NBN.

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Question No: 24

Hansard ref: in writing

Topic: Transition from Copper Services to the NBN– Community consultation/education

The Committee asked:

What is the policy for later connection to the NBN by households that elect to not have an immediate NBN connection?

Is there a cost involved for the householder to be connected to the NBN beyond the initial rollout date for a particular area?

Answer:

NBN Co will contact residents and property owners to explain connection options as the NBN rollout progresses in each area and will offer multiple opportunities to premises-owners to connect to the NBN during the period leading up to the migration of customers from the copper network to the fibre network.

At this stage all connections are being offered for free. It should be noted that these opportunities to connect are being offered both during the rollout phase when construction crews are in the local area and once the network is ready for service. It is still under consideration whether or not to levy a charge in a situation where a premises owner has not taken up the multiple offers to connect for free, but subsequently wishes to connect.

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Question No: 25

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Transition from Copper Services to the NBN– Community consultation/education

The Committee asked:

Are there many householders that have not elected to have an NBN connection? Of these, what are the main reasons provided?

Answer:

As at 13 November 2012, there are no rollout areas where the 18-month migration window for managed disconnections by Telstra has begun.

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Question No: 28

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Medical Alarms

The Committee asked:

Many RSPs will not be supporting a UNI-V (voice) port service—householders requiring medical alarms will therefore need to select an RSP that provides this, to ensure that their alarm service continues to work when the NBN is connected. How could this best be facilitated and what role might NBN Co have in this regard?

Answer:

Analogue medical alarms will be fully supported on the NBN via NBN Co's UNI-V port, which is supported by the backup battery. Internet Protocol (IP) based medical alarms will also be supported by the NBN over the User Network Interface Data (UNI-D) product. NBN Co is currently developing battery backup functionality for the UNI-D. Once this is implemented, IP-based medical alarms will also be fully supported on the NBN.

Outside of NBN Co's activities, the Communications Alliance is developing a set of recommendations for how RSPs inform end-users of their legacy service support at the time of sign up. In addition to the RSPs providing clear information about what legacy service they do and do not support, there is also a role for the alarm industry to educate and inform their end-users about the requirements of their alarms so that their end-users are better able to choose the telecommunications service to best meet their needs.

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Question No: 29

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Medical Alarms

The Committee asked:

What should happen when a new medical alarm is required for a householder who has previously entered into a long-term service contract with an RSP that does not support the UNI-V port service required for the medical alarm?

Answer:

The same thing that should happen today in cases where end-users require a new medical alarm but are in a long term contract with a VoIP service provider who does not support medical alarms: the end-user should take up a service from a provider who does offer the support they require.

See also the answer to QoN 26/27 for information on the functionality of medical alarms on the User Network Interface – Data (UNI-D) port.

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Question No: 35

Hansard ref: In writing

Topic: Community Engagement and Education

The Committee asked:

What current progress has there been in engaging and educating rural and remote communities in readiness for receiving the NBN rollout?

Answer:

NBN Co has been making good progress in engaging and educating communities all over Australia. This has been achieved through numerous workshops, community meetings, presentations to local councils, local area marketing and other advertising. Please see page 27 of the 2012-15 Corporate Plan for more details.

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Question No: 41

Hansard Ref: In writing

Topic: Satellite Network

The Committee asked:

What is being done to ensure satellite broadband will be capable of delivering reliable service?

Answer:

NBN Co's next-generation satellites will be purpose-built to minimise the technology limitations associated with current satellite services. This will deliver a step-change in performance for satellite users in terms of speed and reliability.

NBN Co has specified high availability and reliability targets for its Long Term Satellite System. These targets have been apportioned to each of the individual LTSS contracts, specifically: space segment (satellite), ground segment (Gateway and VSAT User Terminal) as well as the terrestrial backhaul network.

At a system level, NBN Co is utilising two satellites such that in the unlikely event of a satellite failure, service could be maintained through a single NBN Co satellite. Additionally all user links will incorporate the ability to dynamically vary their transmission attributes (uplink power level and waveform characteristics) in order to maximise availability during degraded weather conditions.

Other measures include a Disaster Recovery Gateway station which can assume full traffic loads from any of the nine primary Gateway stations, carrier class network architecture and infrastructure at the data processing and network management centres and Customer Premises Equipment that is designed to withstand the wide range of adverse conditions (temperature, dust, vermin, corrosion, wind etc.).

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Question No: 64

Hansard Ref: In writing

Topic: NBN Interim Satellite Service

The Committee asked:

How much is it costing homeowners on average to have old ABG satellite dishes removed before having the NBN equipment installed?

Answer:

The removal of old Australian Broadband Guarantee (ABG) dishes is a discretionary activity that can be provided by a number of third parties at the homeowner's request. NBN Co does not hold information on these external transactions.

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Question No: 75

Hansard ref: page 15

Topic: Power Poles

Mr Symon asked:

Could you provide the Committee with the weight or mass involved of a fibre cable being run on poles compared to HFC?

Answer:

1 kilometre of Type 2 or RPX cable (as is being used by NBN Co) weighs 92kg. NBN Co does not have details regarding the weight of HFC, but it does require a steel catenary (support) wire in addition to the HFC cable, whereas the NBN cable is self-supporting and doesn't require a steel catenary.

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Question No: 76

Hansard Ref: page 16

Topic: Power Poles

Mr Mitchell asked:

How many agreements have been settled with power utility companies in different states and territories?

Answer:

Eight.

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Question No: 82

Hansard Ref: page 19

Topic: NBN Interim Satellite Service

Mr Hartsuyker asked:

Could NBN Co provide a distribution of times for orders being placed for the Interim Satellite Service to a customer being activated?

Answer:

Average lead times (actual) by business days between May 2012 and October 2012 is 18 days in Zone 1-2 (urban/rural) and 25 days in Zone 3 (remote).

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Question No: 83

Hansard ref: page 20

Topic: NBN Rollout to Townsville

Senator Ian Macdonald asked:

I understand that, in Townsville, the area from China Street to Ross River Road to Nathan Street and Ross River has recently been connected—from your overhead wires to houses.

On notice, please tell me how many homes can be connected and how many actually are being connected?

Answer:

The area mentioned is covered by Fibre Serving Area Module (FSAM) 4GUL-01, which passes approximately 2850 premises. These premises can now order a service through their chosen RSP and are being connected progressively as they do so.

There are currently 791 activated premises in the FSAM, which represents a take-up of approximately 28 per cent.

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Question No: 85

Hansard ref: page 20

Topic: Power Poles

Senator Ian Macdonald asked:

What costs has NBN Co allowed in costing projections for paying power companies for the use of their power poles?

Are you able to direct me to, somewhere in NBN Co's figures, the Australia-wide figure NBN Co has allowed for to pay these companies?

Answer:

The agreements in place between NBN Co and the utilities contain confidentiality requirements. Disclosure of confidential and commercially sensitive information such as sums paid, even on an 'averaged' basis, may therefore result in a breach of these obligations. The release of this kind of information may cause harm to NBN Co's commercial relationships including those currently under negotiation and may negatively impact upon our ability to function as a commercial entity.

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Question No: 86

Hansard ref: page 21

Topic: NBN Rollout

Mr Fletcher asked:

Senator Conroy said on *Meet the Press* on 22 July that the total number of services in operation at that time was 15,000. Could you provide a reconciliation of that with the figures that you have provided for services in operation as at 30 June in the annual report?

Answer:

According to figures in the 2011-12 Annual Report, the total premises activated at 30 June 2012 was 13,536. By 22 July, this figure had increased and aligned with that stated by the Minister.

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Question No: 89

Hansard ref: page 23

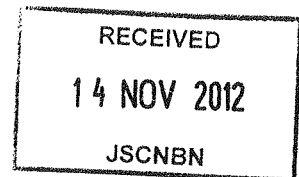
Topic: Government report to the JCNBN - Resources

Mr Oakeshott asked:

What has caused employee expenses to almost double since the end of 2011-12? Is it NBN Co's understanding that it is because they employed more people?

Answer:

Please see answer to QoN 11



@5.19 pm

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Question No: 90

Hansard ref: page 24

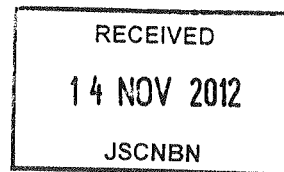
Topic: NBN Co Financials

Mr Turnbull asked:

Why do you still have an NBN Tasmania board and pay a couple of hundred grand to the directors, when it is no longer a separate company?

Answer:

Please see response to QoN 349 from the Budget Estimates Hearings, May 2012.



@1.52 pm