

Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network
Answers to Questions on Notice
Public Hearing 16 April 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 11

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Network Maintenance

The Joint Committee asked:

- a) Does the current design of the network allow for upgrades to newer technologies in the future?
- b) In what ways is the design adaptable and flexible to accommodate technological advances?

Answer:

a) & b)

In order to allow for flexible application of the NBN Co access network design the physical architecture is built from three main functional components including:

1. The Passive Fibre Network (the network of fibre joining premises to network sites and interconnecting network sites)
2. Fibre Access Node site (containing active equipment that connects the Fibre Serving Area to its parent Aggregation Node)
3. Aggregation Node site which generally contains the Point of Interconnect (supporting connection between end-users and Access Seekers)

The design of the passive fibre access network is adaptable and flexible due to the use of International Standards for all of the connectivity points, and the provision of additional fibre to allow for the seamless integration of advancements in Passive Optical Network transmission technologies without major interruption to the operating end-users.

The design of the active network follows a modular approach where the functionality is provided in a series of sub-systems which are also adaptable and flexible due to the use of International Standards for all of the connectivity points, and the provision of additional capabilities to allow for the seamless integration of advancements in PON transmission technologies without major interruption to the operating end-users.

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Question No: 13

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contracts

The Joint Committee asked:

- a) What role does the Government have in assessing tenders for contracts?
- b) Is it best practice for tenders of government business enterprises to publish the details (price, name of awarded company etc) of an awarded contract?
- c) Would it enhance competition and cost-efficiency if a tender for works that combined multiple elements were divided into smaller, separate contracts?

Answer:

- a) NBN Co has been established as a wholly owned Commonwealth company with an independent Board responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company. NBN Co is required to operate on a commercial basis and at arms-length from Government. In accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act), NBN Co must notify responsible Ministers of significant events. This includes notifying Shareholder Ministers prior to signing significant contracts.

As a Government Business Enterprise, NBN Co is not subject to the processes of the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines*, however, the company has committed to adhere to the principles of fairness, transparency, competition and value, which are reflected in those guidelines.

- b) There are no formal requirements in the *Commonwealth Government Business Enterprise Governance and Oversight Guidelines* that require tender outcomes to be published by GBEs. The Department of Finance and Deregulation, is responsible for administering the *Commonwealth Government Business Enterprise Governance and Oversight Guidelines* including the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies* legislation.
- c) Not always; it depends on the nature of the procurement of goods and/or services. Factors to be assessed include the market structure, and the risk that the technical and management resources required to integrate the disparate elements may exceed any gains from attempting to optimise every single element of the purchase.

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Question No: 23

Hansard Ref: In writing

Topic: In-home wiring guide for SDUs and MDUs

Mr Hartsuyker MP asked:

To date, how many versions of the “*In-home wiring guide for SDUs and MDUs*” have been released by NBN Co?

Answer:

As indicated by the response to QoN 7, guides to developers, builders and cablers are updated regularly with NBN Co consulting widely with builders, developers and peak associations as part of the standard process of developing and disseminating updates.

Generally, updates have provided for easier and better approaches with a view to reducing costs to either home builders or NBN Co. For example, the changes in the last version were in response to home construction practices in WA, and facilitated a lower cost installation in masonry walls. It also incorporated recently released specifications for gas line clearance, which weren't available to NBN Co at the time of the previous release.

To date there have been four updates to NBN Co's wiring/installation guide for new developments, now entitled, *Preparation and Installation Guide for Single Dwelling Units (SDU) and Multi Dwelling Units (MDU)* (NBN-NO-GDE-0011). That is, the current version is version 5. It is available online at: <http://www.nbnco.com.au/assets/documents/preparation-and-installation-guide-for-sdus-and-mdus.pdf>.