

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 7

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Written, 22/02/2016

Topic: Planned Satellite - QoN 107 SBE

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

On 7 August 2015, an NBN Co answer to a question on notice (Number 107 from Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015) was submitted to the Estimates Committee, which indicated that Queenstown, Rosebery and Zeehan were now planned to be served with satellite:

Answer:

Place	Technology	Preliminary Design Planned Start	1st Serving Area Module (SAM) Forecast Ready for Service (RFS)
Ulverstone	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Penguin	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Sulphur Creek	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Heybridge	FW/Satellite	No planned dates at this stage, as a technology assessment is underway	
Queenstown	Satellite	No planned dates at this stage, as a technology assessment is underway	
Railton	FTTX	Q4 2015	Q2 2017
Rosebery	Satellite	No planned dates at this stage, as a technology assessment is underway	
Westbury	FTTX	Q2 2015	Q3 2016
Wynyard	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q2 2017
Zeehan	Satellite	No planned dates at this stage, as a technology assessment is underway	

However, shortly after this answer was distributed, it was withdrawn and replaced with an another NBN Co answer, which removed information indicating that satellite was the access technology selected for Queenstown, Rosebery and Zeehan:

Answer:

Place	Technology	Preliminary Design Planned Start	1st Serving Area Module (SAM) Forecast Ready for Service (RFS)
Ulverstone	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Penguin	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Sulphur Creek	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q1 2017
Heybridge	Planning still underway		
Queenstown	Planning still underway		
Railton	FTTX	Q4 2015	Q2 2017
Rosebery	Planning still underway		
Westbury	FTTX	Q2 2015	Q3 2016
Wynyard	FTTX	Q3 2015	Q2 2017
Zeehan	Planning still underway		

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- (a) Was the Department instructed by the Minister's office to withdraw the first version of the answer to question on notice Number 107 from Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015, and replace it with the subsequent version?
- (b) Why did NBN Co/the Minister's office/the Department—whomever was responsible—withdraw its first answer to question on notice number 107 from Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015 and replace it with a non-answer that clearly attempted to hide the fact that these towns would be served with satellite instead of fixed line broadband?

Answer:

(a)-(b) The original answer sent by the Department of Communications to the Committee for question on notice Number 107 from Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015 was sent in error. The original answer contained information that, at the time, was yet to be confirmed. The Department therefore sent the correct version that is available on the Australian Parliament House website.