

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

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Question No: 141

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Hansard Ref: Written, 22/02/16

Topic: nbn Staffings

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

On 2GB radio in January, Mr Morrow said that NBN had “about 5,000 internal people at NBN, there’s probably about another 7,000 people helping us put this thing together.” [*Bill Morrow and Chris Smith, 21 January 2016, Time index 4 minutes 27 seconds*]

On page 29 of NBN Co’s Half Year Results 2016 presentation, NBN Co sets out that it has “4,191 employees, growth rate of 16% from June 2015.”

- (a) Is the difference between the 5,000 internal staff mentioned by Mr Morrow on radio, and the 4,191 employees noted in your results, contractors working at NBN Co? If so, please set out specifics of the purposes for which these contractors have been hired. If not, please explain the difference.
- (b) Is NBN’s total internal workforce, including employees and contractors working internally, not counting boots on the ground actually building the network, 5,000 people? If not, what is it?
- (c) As of 30 June 2013, NBN Co’s “head count was 2,808 comprising 2,745 employees, 12 contractors and 51 labour hires” (page 40, NBN Co’s 2013 Annual Report). Why have NBN Co’s internal employee numbers grown so much since 2013?
- (d) In June last year, the Prime Minister said that QUOTE “At the moment, a quarter of the NBN’s employees – almost 1,000 workers – are employed in the company’s IT departments.” [“Lessons from the NBN,” 11 June 2015]. How much of the growth in NBN’s internal employees and contractors is attributable to NBN Co’s IT needs under the Multi Technology Mix?
- (e) How many employees and contractors at NBN Co are working on NBN Co’s IT systems for the Multi-Technology Mix?

Answer:

- (a) As at 31 December 2015, the internal workforce comprised of:

Employees	4,142
Temporary Staff Augmentation (contractors)	1,228
Total internal workforce	5,370

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One of the strategies adopted by nbn to optimise its workforce is to engage individuals under fit for purpose employment instruments. Where a piece of work is short term in nature and requires a highly specialist skill set then Temporary Staff Augmentation (TSA = contractors) are engaged.

- (b) The total internal workforce includes employees and contractors working internally; not counting boots on the ground. See table in (a) for total internal workforce.
- (c) The growth in nbn's staffing requirements reflects scaling to achieve the Company's target rollout.
- (d) The IT organisation has grown over the past 24 months due to two key drivers – (1) to manage the increase in active customers on our networks and associated systems and (2) to support further efficiencies in Fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) and Fixed Wireless and to deliver capability associated with the launch of our Long Term Satellite, Fibre-to-the-Node (FTTN) and Hybrid Fibre-Coaxial (HFC) products. While it isn't possible to directly attribute workforce to each of these activities we do expect the IT workforce to reduce once we reach a level of operational maturity across the MTM (Multi Technology Mix) products.
- (e) It isn't possible to directly attribute workforce to each of the separate technologies under the MTM. As a result, the breakdown of this information is not readily available.