

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016**

**Communications Portfolio**

**nbn**

**Question No: 86**

**nbn**

**Hansard Ref: Page 100-101, 09/02/2016**

**Topic: Queenstown**

**Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:**

**Senator URQUHART:** In the response to question 127, nbn co advised that Queenstown qualifies as being underserved. Could you advise how the government is prioritising Queenstown as per its promise for underserved areas?

**Mr Morrow:** We look nationally first and see which underserved areas are there. As we roll out the buildout we want to make sure that, proportionately, we are doing more in the underserved areas than we are in the served areas. That has been a metric that we have held strong to—it has been a part of the planning process and it has been something that we have executed against. As far as the detailed specific for Tasmania, I do not have those. I do not think we included those in the last report, but we deal with it from a national level. I am happy to take on notice if the senator would like to find out what portion of the underserved areas are being rolled out.

**Senator URQUHART:** I would certainly like some more information on that, because I do not understand why, if it is an underserved area, it is not a priority.

**Mr Morrow:** It is. Again, on an aggregate level you can always take a granular level and say, 'This particular town or suburb has an underserved area within it—why isn't that a priority?' At the national level we are addressing exactly what the government mandate is, but when you get down into a micro level there is always going to be an area that does not feel like it is being prioritised, when at the national level it is. That is just the nature of the rollout—it had never been directed to us to put all underserved areas first and then come back and roll out to the areas that are well served already; it was always on a prioritised basis. Hence the proportionate focus on them.

**Senator URQUHART:** If you can provide some more information, that would be useful.

**Answer:**

Underserved is not defined in the Broadband Availability and Quality Report (BAQP). There were five ratings given for quality and availability in the report, A (highest) to E (lowest) rating. The primary unit of analysis for this report is the Telstra Distribution Area (DA). These DAs do not necessarily align with nbn's construction planning.

In the BAQP analysis, Queenstown received an A rating for overall fixed broadband availability and a D rating for overall fixed broadband quality, which qualifies as underserved according to nbn's criteria.

Queenstown will be served with satellite, which will be ready for service this fiscal year. The technology solution is subject to review as the deployment approaches and some towns may include both fixed-line and satellite services in their footprint.

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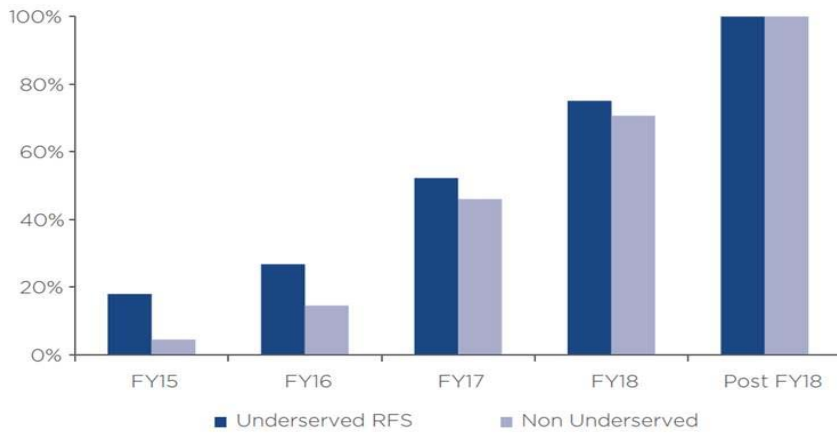
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In accordance with the April 2014 Statement of Expectations, nbn’s rollout of the multi-technology mix (MTM) is prioritising underserved areas to the extent commercially and operationally feasible. The MTM rollout for the next three years is currently passing more than the proportionate amount of underserved premises in these areas.

The progression of the rollout of underserved areas vs. served areas is shown in nbn’s 2016 Corporate Plan.



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