

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

nbn

Question No: 98

nbn

Hansard Ref: Page 114-116, 9/02/2016

Topic: Number of nodes being built

Senator Conroy, Stephen asked:

Senator CONROY: How many nodes are you building? Is it the 25,544 set out in the NBN document? You want to say, 'I cannot confirm', but everybody knows it is your document. The question is a very simple, straightforward one. I do not believe it could possibly be commercial-in-confidence because there is nobody else who owns the copper; therefore nobody else can access your copper to compete and build a node network with you. So is the estimate of 24,544 nodes in the document leaked from NBN Co. an accurate number?

Mr Morrow: I cannot confirm anything that is in that document. If that was our document, it would be commercial-in-confidence. I cannot even confirm that it is our document. Anybody can prepare something of that nature. Therefore the information that you are asking, if you want to know the number of nodes or something then I am happy to take that on notice.

Senator CONROY: No, I am asking in relevance to the document. I expect that you are probably building more than 24,000 but I am happy for you to say 24,000 was only up to a particular point in the build.

Mr Morrow: Again, I cannot comment on the document itself. I cannot confirm that it is even an NBN document. If you have a question around how many nodes by a certain point in time, I can happily take that on notice and we can look at that.

Senator CONROY: Mr Rue, have you done a calculation in your corporate plan about how many nodes will be built and what the cost of building those nodes will be?

Mr Rue: We have certainly done the calculation of the cost per premise and the capex.

Senator CONROY: No, the cost of the actual physical nodes. You must know how many are going to be built to cost it.

Mr Morrow: We will have to take that on notice.

Senator CONROY: What commerciality could possibly involve you telling us an accurate number of nodes that you intend to build?

CHAIR: Senator Conroy, Mr Morrow has taken that question on notice—

Senator CONROY: And then he gave a commentary. I am commenting on his commentary.

CHAIR: Saying that Mr Morrow is now deliberately misleading the committee, when he has agreed to take this question on notice to provide you with factual information so that he is not misleading this committee—

Senator CONROY: Could you actually read the rules of the Senate before you start—

CHAIR: Let's not go down this path again.

Senator CONROY: And not mislead about what I have said. You have just put words in my mouth that I did not actually speak.

CHAIR: Let's just clarify this: you have asked Mr Morrow for some very detailed information and Mr Morrow has indicated that he cannot give it to you tonight because he does not have the exact figures—is that correct, Mr Morrow?

Mr Morrow: That is correct.

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CHAIR: But you have agreed to take it on notice and to provide the exact information to Senator Conroy, as long as it is not commercial-in-confidence—is that correct?

Mr Morrow: That is correct.

Senator CONROY: I am simply asking for the number of nodes.

Mr Morrow: By which time or in the total build?

Senator CONROY: At the end; I am happy to take it at the end. I will come back to whether this describes the end, but the end.

Mr Morrow: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Under the latest rollout designs, nbn anticipates the total build of the fibre to the node rollout to include approximately 30,000 nodes.