

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014**  
**Communications Portfolio**  
**Department of Communications**

**Question No: 536**

**Program No. 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: Page 113 (29/5/2014)**

**Topic: Universal service and cross-subsidy**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

**Senator Ludlam:** And so it is the end of May 2014 and you still cannot tell us what those estimates are?

**Mr Rousselot:** Until the negotiation is completed, I do not think it would be appropriate to release that number.

**Senator Ludlam:** That is going to be fascinating, isn't it?

Is the company still committed to the principle of universal service and cross-subsidy where the lucrative urban market subsidises the satellite and the wireless product on the fringes of the network?

**Mr Morrow:** Yes.

**Senator Ludlam:** Senator Fifield, is that still firmly government policy?

**Senator Fifield:** I will take that on notice.

**Senator Ludlam:** Oh God, really?

**Senator Fifield:** Really. Those sorts of broader policy questions are more appropriate for 1.1. I will take it on notice.

**Answer:**

A key objective of the NBN is to ensure that premises in Australia have access to high quality broadband services at affordable prices.

NBN Co's Special Access Undertaking, which was accepted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on 13 December 2013, sets out NBN Co's national wholesale prices for reference products.

On 12 December 2013, the Government initiated a review of the regulatory arrangements relevant to the NBN by appointing a panel of experts, led by Dr Michael Vertigan AC. As part of this review, the panel is examining NBN Co's products and pricing. The panel will provide its report to the Government shortly. The Government will consider the report and provide its response.