

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 5

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 11-13, 24/05/2017

Topic: Migration Assurance Framework - Monitoring

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked:

Senator O'NEILL: How is what you have just described to me different from what you have been doing previously? If you were doing that before, how is this new?

Dr Smith: There is always ongoing coordination and consultation with all of those agencies. Given the exponential rollout now and with more users coming online, as you have outlined, some of the consumer experiences have been suboptimal, to say the least. We can take you through all the initiatives that are going on within all of those bodies. My point is that it is very important that there is enhanced coordination from where we have been, and the minister has asked us to do that.

Senator O'NEILL: Can I go to my original question, which was what are you actually going to monitor?

...

Senator O'NEILL: Could you take on notice to clearly indicate in some form that is easily legible what monitoring you were doing previously and what has changed in terms of what you monitor now—because it sounds like it is a lot of the same but probably you are doing it a bit more. Can you clarify for me that you have no additional staff but you have changed the focus of the staff—the 70 that you employ—and this has become more of a priority for them. And what is changing over the next three months? If this is the year of the consumer, what are you going to be doing that is so different from what has been failing? That is what I want to see, and I do not see change; I see more of the same, from what I heard today. It is good that those things are happening, but if that is what has been happening then the consumer experience certainly has not been benefiting from it really. So what is going to change to actually improve the experience? That is what I want to understand. What are you monitoring?

Ms Balzary: Okay.

CHAIR: On that, can I ask for a bit more information. Could you also provide information on the causes of—you are obviously doing an analysis, because you said there are multiple reasons and multiple different consumer issues. Could you list those out but say who is responsible? One of the things we have heard here through the department and NBN in the past is that one of the biggest causes of complaints is not actually from NBN but from the ISP providers and some of the complaints around that. Do not go to too much effort, but if you could just pull it together to give us an idea of where some of these problems are that you are facing and then how all of these programs and agencies you are bringing together tackle them, just to give us that complete picture, that would be very helpful.

Answer:

Please also refer to answer provided for Question on Notice no. 4 (Hansard ref: Page 8-9, 24/5/2017).

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There are four key areas of focus in monitoring the customer NBN experience.

1. Customers have accurate information to make informed choices.

This involves reviewing information being distributed to customers to ensure it is easy to understand and informs choices e.g. on speed and data requirements to meet customer needs.

2. Systems and processes are improved to support consumers as they connect to a new NBN service.

This involves monitoring the systems and processes that have been put into place to support the end to end process involved in connecting a customer to a new NBN service. This includes working with industry to ensure it is delivering on what has been collectively agreed e.g. the Migration Assurance Framework and other industry led customer improvement initiatives.

3. Consumers receive a reliable service and get the plan they paid for.

This involves working closely with regulators (the ACMA and the ACCC) on a range of initiatives including the Broadband Performance Monitoring and Reporting program that will independently measure and report on the performance of broadband speeds and adherence by industry of current consumer safeguards.

4. Clear processes are in place to efficiently address consumer queries and complaints.

This involves working with NBN Co, industry and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman to improve customer query resolution and complaints handling.