

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2013
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 309

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: NBN Towers

Senator McKenzie asked:

- 1) Have any NBN towers been refused a local planning permit? Specify the locations.
- 2) How many towers are pending planning approval and where are they located?
- 3) Could you list the number of NBN towers in rural areas that have been utilised by mobile phone carriers to expand their service? Is the utilisation of these towers 100% by carriers?
- 4) In general, does a high number simultaneous mobile phone connections degrade the upload or download speed of internet services associated with a specific tower?
- 5) In comparing a connection to the same server, what is the relative PING ratio of optical cable as compared to wireless connection?

Answer:

- 1) Two sites around the Ballarat Region namely Yendon and Napoleons have had Development Applications rejected.
- 2) There are 846 sites awaiting planning approval in locations across Australia as at end February 2013.
- 3) There has been interest shown and also discussions between NBN Co and the mobile carriers for a number of sites. NBN Co is working closely with the interested parties to ensure, where possible, their interests can be accommodated on these structures.
- 4) NBN Co does not offer a mobile phone service and other mobile providers on the same tower would use different spectrum.
- 5) The relative performance with respect to latency (delay) on the fibre network and the fixed wireless network can be seen in the performance targets published in the Wholesale Broadband Agreement (WBA) documentation¹.

¹ NBN Co, Ethernet Bitstream Service Product Technical Specification, p.71, Table 57.
<http://www.nbnco.com.au/assets/documents/sfaa-wba-wba-nebs-product-tech-spec-20130227.pdf>

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Question No: 310

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: NBN Towers

Senator McKenzie asked:

- 1) Local Councils across Victoria are now starting to struggle with processing planning approvals for NBN tower sites, with so many objections lodged staff are finding themselves overwhelmed.
Background: <http://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/1280485/lockwood-nbn-tower-plans-blasted/?cs=80>
NBN Co has told me that it works with local communities and Councils on these problems – but they don't seem to be going away.
Do you agree that this indicates NBN Co isn't doing enough to work with local communities?
- 2) For how many towers has NBN Co sought local government approval in Victoria?
- 3) How many towers have not required local government approval?
- 4) How many applications regarding towers have been rejected by local governments?
- 5) In these instances, what alternative options have been considered?
- 6) Please provide an update on the outcomes of those applications that have been rejected by local governments.
- 7) What is the proportion and number of NBN towers that involve sharing an existing mobile telephone tower?
- 8) How many premises has NBN passed in regional Australia?
- 9) How many sign ups?

Answers

- 1) No. Please see answer to QoN 301.
- 2) 226 sites have had Design Applications lodged or are proposed to be lodged.
- 3) 120 sites have had Low Impact notifications issued or are proposed to be issued in Victoria.

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- 4) See answer to QoN 309.
 - 5) In both instances NBN Co will service these communities with satellite.
 - 6) See part 5 above.
 - 7) Approximately 35% share existing infrastructure based on current designs in progress.
- 8 & 9) Please see NBN Co media release on 29 January 2013, which provides satellite and wireless figures <http://www.nbnco.com.au/about-us/media/news/rollout-update.html?rss=news>

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Question No: 311

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Transfer to Telstra via TUSMA

Senator Birmingham asked:

TUSMA last year entered into a number of contracts with Telstra for the provision of the Universal Service Obligation and similar public interest services. According to AusTender (Reference: [CN1004881](#)) the nominal dollar value of TUSMA's contractual obligations to Telstra over the next 20 years is \$6.38 billion.

1. What total contribution, if any, is it estimated that NBN Co will make to TUSMA via the industry levy in each of the current forward estimate years (assuming NBN Co's rollout, customer acquisition and revenues progress according to the forecasts in the 2012-2015 Corporate Plan)?
2. What total contribution, if any, is it anticipated NBN Co will make to TUSMA via the industry levy in 2022-23, after the NBN is completed (assuming forecasts in the Corporate Plan are achieved)?

Answer

NBN Co's 2012-15 Corporate Plan includes estimates of NBN Co's contribution to the TUSMA levy. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is currently in the process of making an eligible revenue determination for current forward estimate years.

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Question No: 312

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Armidale

Senator Williams asked:

- 1) How many premises has the fibre for the National Broadband Network passed in Armidale
- 2) How many premises have connected?
- 3) A break-up of those premises (residential/ business/ educational/ professional etc
- 4) How many premises in Armidale do not to have fibre past them
- 5) Is the Armidale rollout on time and budget
- 6) How much has been spent so far in Armidale on the rollout and the budget for the complete rollout.

Answer:

- 1 & 2. Please refer to NBN Co's submission "Financial and rollout data" of 19 April 2013 to the public hearing of the Joint Committee on the NBN.
3. NBN Co does not have precise visibility of the purpose of each connection.
4. At this stage NBN Co does not record premises not passed by fibre.
5. Five out of a total of six Fibre Serving Area Modules (FSAMs) are ready for service in Armidale. The final FSAM is expected to be ready for service in the second quarter of 2013.
6. The amount of money spent on the NBN rollout in Armidale to 31 December 2012 was \$20.8m of which \$15.8m had been incurred to date in building the Access Network and connecting and activating premises in FSAM's 1, 2 and 3 (which includes the University of New England). Armidale FSAMs 4, 5 and 6 had an incurred cost of \$5.0m.

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Question No: 313

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How many ongoing staff have been recruited this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
- 2) How many non-ongoing positions exist or have been created this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
- 3) This financial year to date, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

- 1) 833 ongoing staff have been recruited this financial year to date (as at 28 February 2013). These staff were classified as permanent.
- 2) 75 non-ongoing staff have been employed this financial year to date (as at 28 February 2013). There are an additional 15 vacant non-ongoing positions that exist or have been created this financial year to date.
- 3) 85 employees have been employed on contract this financial year to date. The average length of employment is 4.6 months.

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Question No: 314

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How many ongoing staff have left the department/agency this financial year to date? What classification were these staff?
- 2) How many non-ongoing staff left the department/agency this financial year to date? What classification were these staff?
- 3) How many contract staff left the department/agency in the year this financial year to date? What classification were these staff?

Answer:

- 1) 104 ongoing staff left NBN Co this financial year to date (as at 28 February 2013). These staff were classified as permanent. At end of February, NBN Co's annualised employee turnover was at 8.3 per cent, compared to an average of 17.4 per cent for organisations with over 1000 employees in Australia (Australian Human Resources Institute, 2008).
- 2) 10 non-ongoing staff have left NBN Co this financial year to date (as at 28 February 2013). These staff were classified as maximum term.
- 3) 53 contract staff have left NBN Co this financial year to date. These staff were classified as contractors or labour hires.

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Question No: 315

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details including if there is a reduction target, how this will be achieved, and if any services/programs will be cut. If there are plans for staff reductions, please give the reason why these are happening.

Answer:

No.

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Question No: 316

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Making the Public Service more efficient

Senator Birmingham asked:

Please provide an update of the savings achieved through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012

http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html).

In addition, please provide the following detail:

- 1) Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for reductions in air travel?
- 2) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- 3) Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the Department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- 4) Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- 5) Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved – if yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer

NBN Co is a Government Business Enterprise and is not subject to the efficiencies outlined in media release from the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012.

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Question No: 317

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Printing Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

How many documents (include the amount of copies) have been printed this financial year to date?

How many of these printed documents were also published online?

Answer

Determining the number of documents printed across all business areas would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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Question No: 318

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Graduate Recruitment

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How much has been spent on 2014 Graduate Recruitment to date? Please itemise and detail costs.
- 2) Has any travel been incurred for 2014 Graduate Recruitment? Please itemise and detail costs.

Answer:

Nil.

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Question No: 319

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Graduate Training

Senator Birmingham asked:

How much was spent on 2013 Graduate Training?

Provide details of what training was provided, why and the estimated cost for each.

Answer:

As at 31 January 2013, nil costs were spent on 2013 Graduate Training.

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Question No: 320

Topic: Government Advertising

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What was the total cost of all advertising for the financial year to date?
- 2) Is the advertising campaign or non-campaign advertising? Provide details of each advertising, including the program the advertising was for, the total spend and the business that provided the advertising services.
- 3) Has the Department of Finance and Deregulation provided any advice about the advertising? Provide details of each advertising item.
- 4) Has the Peer Review Group (PRG) and/or Independent Communications Committee (ICC) provided any advice about the advertising? Provide details of each advertising item.
- 5) Did the Advertising comply with the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies? Provide the details for each advertising item.
- 6) Provide details for any other communications program, including details of the program, the total spend and the business that provided the communication services.
- 7) What advertising – Campaign and Non-Campaign – and other communications programs is the Department/Agency undertaking, or are planning to undertake?

Answer:

- 1) \$581,000 has been spent on above-the-line advertising to the end of January 2013.
- 2) NBN Co does not categorise advertising as ‘campaign’ or ‘non-campaign’. The \$581,000 (above) includes :
 - \$143,000 for Community Information Session invitations and advertising;
 - \$45,000 for national-level communications regarding the rollout schedule;
 - \$38,000 for public Demonstration advertising and invitations;
 - \$34,000 for online communications; and
 - \$320,000 for Local-level Public Information advertising in line with the rollout schedule and mandated by the public information on migration agreement between the Commonwealth and Telstra.

Most, if not all contracts in place between NBN Co and suppliers contain confidentiality requirements. Disclosure of information such as individual sums paid and other confidential details may therefore result in a breach of these obligations. This may cause harm to NBN

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Co's commercial relationships and negatively impact upon our ability to function as a commercial entity.

3 – 5)

NBN Co is not a Government Department or Agency as defined by the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act). As such it is not subject to the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies (2010).

6)

Comms Program	Spend as at 31.01.13	Details
Public Relations Program	1,440,000	Activities include: Responding to media enquiries, local rollout information PR, events management and staging costs.

Most, if not all contracts in place between NBN Co and suppliers contain confidentiality requirements. Disclosure of information such as individual sums paid and other confidential details may therefore result in a breach of these obligations. This may cause harm to NBN Co's commercial relationships and negatively impact upon our ability to function as a commercial entity.

7) NBN Co is planning communications programs to increase general consumer understanding of the NBN, to inform Australians that a new three year plan has become available on NBN Co's website and provide local public information regarding construction, ready for service and switch over dates, for the fibre and fixed wireless rollouts, in local areas as determined by the rollout schedule.

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Question No: 321

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hospitality and Entertainment

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Is the Department/Agency planning on reducing any of its spending on these items? If so, how will reductions be achieved and what are the estimated savings over each year of the forward estimates?
- 2) What entertainment spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.
- 3) What hospitality spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.
- 4) What is the Department/Agency's entertainment spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.
- 5) What is the Department/Agency's hospitality spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.

Answer

- 1) NBN Co minimises its hospitality and entertainment expenditure through established policies and procedures so as to ensure only necessary expenditure is incurred.
- 2) Please see answer to QoN 411 from October 2012 Estimates.
- 3) Please see answer to QoN 411 from October 2012 Estimates.
- 4) & 5) For the period from 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013, total spend in these areas was \$92,737.

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Question No: 322

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Meeting Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What meeting spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.
- 2) What is the Department/Agency's meeting spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events, including any catering and drinks costs.

Answer:

1-2) NBN Co's meeting spend (including Board meetings) for this financial year to 28 February 2013 is \$71,531. To attempt to provide the requested level of detail (date, location, purpose and cost) for every meeting across every business group would be an unreasonable diversion of company resources.

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Question No: 323

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Program Launch Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What is the Department/Agency's program launch spend for 2011-12? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event including any catering and drinks costs.
- 2) What program launch spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events including any catering and drinks costs.
What is the Department/Agency's program launch spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events, including any catering and drinks costs.

Answer

This question is not applicable to NBN Co.

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Question No: 324

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- 2) What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
- 3) How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date? How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted?
- 4) Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many and why?
- 5) Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

- 1) NBN Co has a dedicated FOI Officer who makes independent decisions regarding NBN Co responses to FOI requests. In making those decisions, our FOI Officer draws upon the FOI Act, relevant case law and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's (OAIC) Guidelines, among other sources. In addition, NBN Co regularly takes advice from its internal company stakeholders.
- 2) NBN Co responds to FOI matters as a normal part of its business activities and those costs cannot be separated from its ongoing expenditures.
- 3) In the financial year 2012-2013, NBN Co received 15 new FOI requests.
NBN Co provided full access in the case of 3 FOI requests.
NBN Co provided partial access with 1 FOI request.
NBN Co refused access in the case of 3 FOI requests.
With 1 FOI application, no documents were found.
3 FOI applications were withdrawn.
4 FOI applications are still pending decisions, but are not overdue.
- 4) NBN Co completed all FOI requests within the processing deadlines outlined in the FOI Act and as per the OAIC's Guidelines.
- 5) Not applicable.

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Question No: 325

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Consultancies

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How many consultancies have been undertaken this financial year to date? Identify the name of the consultant, the subject matter of the consultancy, the duration and cost of the arrangement, and the method of procurement (ie. open tender, direct source, etc). Also include total value for all consultancies.
- 2) How many consultancies are planned for this calendar year? Have these been published in your Annual Procurement Plan (APP) on the AusTender website and if not why not? In each case please identify the subject matter, duration, cost and method of procurement as above, and the name of the consultant if known.

Answer:

- 1) The total value incurred/receipted for consultancies from 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 was \$21.9m.

Functions	\$m
Network Planning and Implementation (Various planning and implementation resource services)	5.4
CIO (Information technology support including BSS and OSS inception and design services)	4.1
Technology Organisation (External consulting services predominately relating satellite and wireless activities)	2.7
Construction (Including detailed design services)	1.7
Network Operations (Including BCM and Network Design Documents support services)	1.0
Product Management and Industry relations (Including access seeker onboarding)	1.0
Chief Operations Officer (Including tactical delivery support)	1.0
Regulatory Affairs and Industry Analysis (Including legal services)	0.7
Telstra Commerical (Various subscriber agreement resource services)	0.7
Other (Quality, HR, Security, Procurement, Finance, Corporate, Facilities, Business Operations, Commercial, Supply Chain, Communications Office)	3.6
Total	21.9

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Most, if not all contracts in place between NBN Co and its consultants contain confidentiality requirements. Disclosure of information such as individual sums paid and other confidential details may therefore result in a breach of these obligations. This may cause harm to NBN Co's commercial relationships and negatively impact upon our ability to function as a commercial entity.

- 2) As a Government Business Enterprise, NBN Co is not required to produce or publish an Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website.

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Question No: 326

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Monitoring

Senator Birmingham asked:

What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the department/agency for this financial year to date?

- a. Which agency or agencies provided these services?
- b. What is the estimated budget to provide these services for the year 2012-13?
- c. What has been spent providing these services this financial year to date?

Answer:

- a. Media Monitors and CCH Australia.
- b. Please see answer to QoN 415 from October 2012 Estimates Hearing.
- c. The cost of media monitoring for 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 was \$61,518.

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Question No: 327

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Social Media

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and useage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issue.
- 2) Does the department/agency monitor usage of social media?
 - a. If yes, provide details of the useage (for example details could include average hours per employee, hours when useage peaks).
 - b. Has there been a change to the department/agency protocols due to staff useage?
 - c. If no, why not? Will the department/agency monitor useage in the future?
- 3) Does social media impact on employee productivity? Provide details (details could include increased internet usage in general or increased internet usage in standard business hours)

Answer:

NBN Co's response to QoN 417 from the October 2012 Estimates remains accurate.

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Question No: 328

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Internet

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the Department experienced any internet problems, such as but not limited to slow internet or internet blackouts? If yes, what was the reason for this? Did it impact the Minister's office?

Answer

From time to time any company or business can experience fluctuations in internet performance for a variety of reasons. An important reason for building a National Broadband Network is to provide a more consistent, reliable service right across Australia.

NBN Co's internet performance has no impact on any Minister's office.

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Question No: 329

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staff Amenities

Senator Birmingham asked:

What amenities are provided to staff? Provide a list.

Answer:

NBN Co provides the usual amenities to staff that would be expected in a safe and productive modern workplace.

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Question No: 330

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Coffee Machines

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Has the department/agency purchased coffee machines for staff useage? If yes, provide a list that includes the type of coffee machine, the cost, the amount, and any ongoing costs such as purchase of coffee or coffee pods and when the machine was purchased.
- 2) Why were coffee machines purchased?
- 3) Has there been a noticeable difference in staff productivity since coffee machines were purchased? Are staff leaving the office premises less during business hours as a result?
- 4) Where did the funding for the coffee machines come from?
- 5) Who is responsible for the maintenance of the coffee machines? How much was spent on maintenance in this financial year to date, include a list of what maintenance has been undertaken. Where does the funding for maintenance come from?
- 6) What are the ongoing costs of the coffee machine, such as the cost of coffee?
- 7) Does the department/agency rent coffee machines for staff useage? If yes, provide a list that includes the type of coffee machine, the cost, the amount, and any ongoing costs such as purchase of coffee or coffee pods and when the machine was purchased.
- 8) Why are coffee machines rented?
- 9) Has there been a noticeable difference in staff productivity since coffee machines were rented? Are staff leaving the office premises less during business hours as a result?
- 10) Where does the funding for the coffee machines come from?
- 11) Who is responsible for the maintenance of the coffee machines? How much was spent on maintenance in this financial year to date, include a list of what maintenance has been undertaken. Where does the funding for maintenance come from?
- 12) What are the ongoing costs of the coffee machine, such as the cost of coffee?

Answer:

Please see answer to QoN 420 from October 2012 Estimates hearing.

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Question No: 331

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Birmingham asked:

For this financial year to date:

- a. Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- b. Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- c. Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- d. Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- e. Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- f. Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- g. Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- h. Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).
- i. Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.
- j. What contractors have been employed by the department/agency? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

Answer:

The response to this question provided at the October Estimates hearing (QoN 421) remains accurate.

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Question No: 332

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grants

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Could the department/agency provide a list of all grants, including ad hoc and one-off grants for this financial year to date? Please provide details of the recipients, the amount, the intended use of the grants and what locations have benefited from the grants.
- 2) Have all grant agreement details been published on its website within the required timeframe? If not, provide details.
- 3) Provide a list of grants that your department/agency administers that had uncommitted grants funding reduced as per the statement by the Finance Minister on 22 October 2012 (see http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_2102012.html). How much was funding reduced for grant?

Answer:

NBN Co does not administer grants.

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Question No: 333

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payments of Accounts

Senator Birmingham asked:

For this financial year to date, has the department/agency paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e.within 30 days)?

- a. If not, why not? Provide details, including what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached)
- b. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio/department agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
- c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

NBN Co is not subject to the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. NBN Co's standard payment terms are 30 days end of month. Accounts are paid in accordance with these terms except where it is found that the supplier has not delivered all of the required deliverables in accordance with their Statement of Work.

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Question No: 334

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Stationary requirements

Senator Birmingham asked:

What are the department/agency's stationery costs for the financial year to date?

Answer:

Stationery costs are recorded within 'office supplies and printing' and cannot be easily disaggregated.

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Question No: 335

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What pay TV subscriptions does your department/agency have?
 - a. Please provide a list of what channels and the reason for each channel.
 - b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

- 2) What newspaper subscriptions does your department/agency have?
 - a. Please provide a list of newspaper subscriptions and the reason for each.
 - b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

- 3) What magazine subscriptions does your department/agency have?
 - a. Please provide a list of magazine subscriptions and the reason for each.
 - b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Answer:

1. NBN Co has subscriptions to Foxtel's Business Information packages in order for the company to stay informed of relevant public affairs and events. As at 25 Feb 2013, financial year to date expenditure was \$7,925 + GST.

2. NBN Co has subscriptions totalling \$19,517 per annum for *The Australian Financial Review*, *The Sydney Morning Herald/The Age*, *The Herald Sun*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Australian*. The subscriptions are to ensure the company can track relevant public developments, business news and industry commentary.
 - b) Financial year to date (as at 25 Feb 2013) expenditure is \$12,780 plus GST.

3. There is no central repository for magazine subscriptions alone. Individuals are able to order periodicals relevant to their work via their expenses.

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Question No: 336

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that includes airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals). Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses
- 2) What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- 3) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- 4) Are the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines being followed? How is the department/agency following the advice? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.
- 5) Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the total costs of the lounge memberships.
- 6) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.
- 7) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

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Answer:

- 1) There are currently more than 55,000 people receiving services on the National Broadband Network from Geraldton in Western Australia, to Townsville in Queensland and Kingston Beach in Tasmania. Construction has commenced or is completed in areas covering well over 900,000 premises all across Australia. As a result, NBN Co staff need to travel to these and many other locations in order to conduct community engagement activities, construction, planning and design operations, and quality control as a normal part of business. In this context, travel expenses for the period to 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 were \$6.8m. All interstate travel requires appropriate approval prior to bookings being made. All International travel requires CEO approval.
- 2 & 3) Travel expenses for 1 March 2013 to 30 June 2013 and 31 December 2013 have not yet been finalised.
- 4) NBN Co operates on a best fare of the day policy, which requires employees to fly on the cheapest available outward bound flight, with the option of the cheapest or basic flexible return ticket for the homeward leg of the trip. All changes to booked air travel, accommodation or car hire also need to be made through the travel management company and not directly with the alternate providers. Thus all travelling will be the most direct route and at the best available commercial rate. International travel is booked on the carrier quoted by the travel management company. Typically this is a national airline or an airline of equivalent standard. All international travel must be approved by the CEO.
- 5) Should NBN Co employees wish to purchase a lounge membership they can do so at a discounted price offered by Qantas at their own expense and this will not be reimbursed by NBN Co.
- 6) For the period 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 there have been four Executive Assistants that have been required to travel with their Executive for inter-state meetings. In each case the employee is required due to the volume of work performed and expertise involved. The cost of travel and accommodation incurred was \$3,062.56.
- 7) No.

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Question No: 337

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- 2) What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- 3) What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- 4) What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

- 1) As at 28 February 2013, and for the financial year to date, the total fees paid to law firms for all legal and regulatory support services was \$11.2 m (8 months inclusive: July 2012- Feb 2013 spend).
- 2) NBN Co has not retained the Australian Government Solicitor during this period.
- 3) See answer to Q1 above.
- 4) Not applicable.

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Question No: 338

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What are the department/agency's guidelines on study?
- 2) For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Answer:

- 1) NBN Co's guidelines on study are unchanged from those outlined in QoN 379 from 2012 Budget estimates.
- 2) The education expenses for the financial year to date (31 January 2013) total \$3,131,554. This includes all onboarding, compliance, technical accreditations, safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, media and management training expenses.

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Question No: 339

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by NBN Co for senior management or the executive team, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
 - a. Total spending on these services
 - b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
 - c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - d. The names of all service providers engaged
- 2) For each service purchased from a provider listed under (iv), please provide:
 - a. The name and nature of the service purchased
 - b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
 - c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
 - d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - e. The total amount spent on the service
 - f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)
- 3) Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
 - a. The location used
 - b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

- 1) This comes under education expenses, which for the financial year to 31 January 2013 totals \$3,131,554. This includes all onboarding, compliance, technical accreditations, safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, media and management training expenses.

To attempt to disaggregate particular items of expenditure across the entire company or to provide the level of detail requested would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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Question No: 340

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Training

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
 - a. Total spending on these services
 - b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
 - c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - d. The names of all service providers engaged

- 2) For each service purchased from a provider listed under (d), please provide:
 - a. The name and nature of the service purchased
 - b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
 - c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - e. The total amount spent on the service
 - f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

- 3) Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
 - a. The location used
 - b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
 - c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

- 1) The education expenses (including media training) for the financial year to 31 January 2013 totals \$3,131,554. This includes all onboarding, compliance, technical accreditations, safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, media and management training expenses.

To attempt to disaggregate particular items of expenditure across the entire company or to provide the level of detail requested would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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Question No: 341

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Please list how many staff in each department and agency are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
- 2) For this financial year to date list which department/agency is providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff and their classification are in receipt of these payments.
- 3) What is the paid parental scheme offered by each department and agency? How many staff have used the scheme this financial year to date.

Answer:

Staff accessing the paid parental leave scheme is a private matter for them and the Department of Human Services.

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Question No: 342

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Corporate Cars

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How cars are owned by each department/agency?
- 2) Where is the car/s located?
- 3) What is the car/s used for?
- 4) What is the cost of each car for this financial year to date?
- 5) How far did each car travel this financial year to date?

Answer:

NBN Co uses lease arrangements and therefore does not own any cars.

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Question No: 343

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How much did each department/agency spend on taxis this financial year to date? Provide a breakdown for each business group in each department/agency.
- 2) What are the reasons for taxi costs?

Answer:

- 1-2) There are currently more than 55,000 people receiving services on the National Broadband Network from Geraldton in Western Australia, to Townsville in Queensland and Kingston Beach in Tasmania. Construction has commenced or is completed in areas covering well over 900,000 premises all across Australia. As a result, NBN Co staff need to travel to these and many other locations in order to conduct community engagement activities, construction, planning and design operations, and quality control as a normal part of business. In this context, the total taxi and train expenditure for the period 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 was \$1.18m.

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Question No: 344

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hire Cars

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How much did each department/agency spend on hire cars this financial year to date? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.
- 2) What are the reasons for hire car costs?

Answer:

- 1) Assuming 'hire cars' refers to rental cars from companies such as Avis or Hertz, the total spent for the period of 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 was \$116,706 excluding fuel costs.
- 2) NBN Co employees use hire cars to travel predominately from airports to NBN Co construction sites or travel between their office and NBN Co construction sites where air travel is not available. The use of hire cars is preferred when the equivalent cost by other means of transport i.e. taxi is prohibitive.

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Question No: 345

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Provide a breakdown for each employment classification that has a corporate credit card.
- 2) Please update details of the following?
 - a. What action is taken if the corporate credit card is misused?
 - b. How is corporate credit card use monitored?
 - c. What happens if misuse of a corporate credit card is discovered?
 - d. Have any instances of corporate credit card misuse have been discovered? List staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.
 - e. What action is taken to prevent corporate credit card misuse?

Answer:

- 1) Generally senior managers at general manager level and above are issued with credit cards. Cards are also issued to other staff depending on their circumstances, such as being frequent travellers. Eligibility for a corporate credit card is governed by NBN Co Corporate Credit Card Policy (the Policy).
- 2)
 - a. As per the Policy, employees may be subject to disciplinary action if they misuse the card. Also, the cards issued are employee liability cards, which mean that if expenditure is not approved in accordance with policy or the employee uses it for a personal item; they are personally liable for the expenditure.
 - b. The cards are "limited liability" cards meaning that employees must pay the balances of the cards themselves and seek reimbursement of business expenses from the company. The provider issues monthly reports to NBN Co of all credit card use. NBN Co can also access card account details online at any time.
 - c. See a.
 - d. There have been no instances of misuse.
 - e. The Policy sets out the use of the card. Integral to the Policy, employees are also subject to the Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy. Business expenses incurred on a card are reported on an Expense Claim Report, which is approved by a cardholder's manager. Expense Claim Reports are then double checked by Accounts Payable for compliance with relevant policies before payment is made.

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Question No: 346

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Provision of Equipment

Senator Birmingham asked:

Is electronic equipment (such as ipad, laptop, wireless card, vasco token, blackberry, mobile phone (list type if relevant), thumb drive) provided to department/agency staff? If yes provide details of what is provided, the purchase cost, the ongoing cost and a breakdown of what staff and staff classification receives it.

Answer:

NBN Co staff are provided with the necessary equipment to carry out their work. Listing the various pieces of equipment provided to staff and cross-checking this against classification and individual requirements would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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Question No: 347

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Electricity Purchasing

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) What are the details of the department/agency electricity purchasing agreement?
- 2) What are the department/agency electricity costs for this financial year to date?

Answer:

- 1) NBN Co has a national agreement in place with AGL only for NBN Co Facilities (Offices/Depots and Aggregation Nodes) in Vic, NSW, ACT, SA and Qld.
- 2) Total cost of electricity for the period July 12 to Feb 13 is \$7,073,537, slightly below forecasts in the 2012-15 Corporate Plan. This reflects the ramp-up in the network rollout and the associated increase in broadband infrastructure.

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Question No: 348

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Briefings for the Australian Greens and Independents

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) Have any briefings and/or provision of information s been provided to the Australian Greens?
If yes, please include:
 - a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
 - b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
 - c. Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
 - d. Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed.
 - e. How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

- 2) Have any briefings and/or provision of information been provided to Independents? If yes, please include:
 - a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
 - b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
 - c. Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
 - d. Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed.
 - e. How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
 - f. Which Independents have requested briefings and/or information?

Answer:

Please see response to QoN 441 from October 2012 Estimates.

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Question No: 349

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Shredders

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the department/agencies purchased any shredders this financial year? If yes, provide details of how many shredders were purchased, the cost of each shredder, why each new shredder was needed and the purpose for which the shredder is to be used.

Answer:

One shredder was purchased and deployed nationally by NBN Co YTD (as at 25 February 2013). The cost of the unit was \$7708 (+GST) which includes installation, five-year maintenance, waste bags and oil. The shredders are required by NBN Co for the business-as-usual disposal of information that cannot be disposed of by other means.

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Question No: 350

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Protective security policy framework

Senator Birmingham asked:

Provide an update for your department/agency, including what is your current compliance level, what are you doing to manage risk, what is being done to comply with the mandatory requirements and details of any department/agency specific policies and procedures.

Answer:

NBN Co is working towards full compliance with the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) by June 2013, and is managing this through identification of auditable evidence of control effectiveness and the maintenance of a formal tracking dashboard which is independently verified and is routinely reported to the Board.

NBN Co has established a full policy framework in accordance with the PSPF, and a series of assurance activities are carried out to ensure ongoing maintenance of compliance. These include Site Security Reviews, Security Clearances and Pre-employment Checking, Application and Platform Access Reviews, Security Health Assessments, Facilities Accreditation, Security Risk Management and IT Systems Accreditation in accordance with the PSPF and the associated Information Security Manual (ISM). A Security Issues Register exists to record security issues when they are detected, to maintain visibility of the security risk while the issues exist, and to manage treatment plans through to resolution.

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Question No: 351

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Office Locations

Senator Birmingham asked:

Please provide a list of all office locations for all departments and agencies within the portfolio by:

- a. Department/Agency;
- b. Location;
- c. Leased or Owned;
- d. Size;
- e. Number of Staff at each location and classification;
- f. If rented, the amount and breakdown of rent per square metre;
- g. If owned, the value of the building;
- h. Depreciation of buildings that are owned;
- i. Type of functions and work undertaken.

Answer:

NBN Co Offices (Excludes premises such as Aggregation Nodes, Depots, Earth Stations etc)

Location	Leased or Owned	Size/SQM	Seating Numbers	Purchase Value	Gross Rent PSM/PA	Depreciation of Owned Buildings	Type of functions and work undertaken
15 National Circuit Barton	Leased	260	11	NA	\$ 400.94	NA	Office
88 Walker Nth Sydney	Leased	1242	130	NA	\$ 399.35	NA	Office
100 Arthur Nth Sydney	Leased	9462	927	NA	\$ 649.20	NA	Office
360 Elizabeth St Melbourne	Leased	7787	706	NA	\$ 556.61	NA	Office
39 Murray St Hobart	Leased	209	15	NA	\$ 244.92	NA	Office
535 Bourke St Melbourne	Leased	2230	230	NA	\$ 475.34	NA	Office
213 Miller St Nth Sydney	Leased	1551	159	NA	\$ 449.68	NA	Office
45 Cameron St Launceston	Leased	76	10	NA	\$ 719.21	NA	Serviced Office
77 Pacific Highway	Leased	602	58	NA	\$ 468.43	NA	Office
54 Victoria Street Hobart	Leased	315	20	NA	\$ 230.00	NA	Office
50 Miller St Nth Sydney	Leased	2069	196	NA	\$ 449.00	NA	Office

Data as at 25 February 2013. Gross rent includes net rent, plus building outgoings such as common area cleaning, rates, building maintenance, etc.

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Question No: 352

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Communications Staff

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) For all departments and agencies, please provide – in relation to all public relations, communications and media staff – the following:
 - a. By Department or agency:
 - i. How many ongoing staff, the classification, the type of work they undertake and their location.
 - ii. How many non-ongoing staff, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location
 - iii. How many contractors, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location
 - iv. How many are graphic designers?
 - v. How many are media managers?
 - vi. How many organise events?
- 2) Do any departments/agencies have independent media studios? If yes, why? When was it established? What is the set up cost? What is the ongoing cost? How many staff work there and what are their classifications?

Answer:

- 1) NBN Co has 58 full time employees whose role it is to broaden the community's awareness and understanding of this nationwide upgrade to Australia's fixed-line telecommunications infrastructure. NBN Co has an obligation, as part of the Commonwealth's agreement with Telstra, "to ensure to the maximum extent practicable" that people receive advance notice of the planned migration to the fibre and are familiar with all the steps they need to take to switch over to the NBN. This is also in line with recommendations of the Joint Committee on the NBN regarding community consultation in remote and regional Australia.

To meet these responsibilities, NBN Co employs:

- community relations officers tasked with liaising with interest groups such as Australia's 565 local councils as well as relevant local community bodies;
- stakeholder officers who are charged with informing business groups and industry bodies such as health, education and rural and regional industry groupings about the NBN;
- government relations officers who liaise with NBN Co's Shareholder Ministers and their departments, other relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory departments and agencies;
- an internal affairs function communicating regular company-specific information to NBN Co staff in every state and territory;
- media relations officers who receive between 50 and 100 media requests per week from national, state, local and regional TV, radio, newspaper and online media outlets as well as oversee the production of corporate documents such as the Annual Report, case studies and press releases;

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- online officers responsible for the NBN Co website and the company's presence in social and other online media outlets; and
- marketing officers tasked with encouraging a smooth migration for all consumers switching to a service on the NBN, accelerating activations to meet or exceed NBN Co's Corporate Plan objectives and to satisfy NBN Co's public information on migration obligations. This also includes the staff who work on NBN Co's experiential facilities such as the NBN Demonstration Truck.

These employees are based in capital cities and other locations as required, e.g. the NBN Demonstration Truck regularly traverses the Australian continent.

2) NBN Co does not have an independent media studio.

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Question No: 353

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grant Freeze

Senator Birmingham asked:

- 1) How much has grant funding been reduced across the department/agency as a result of the grants freeze?
- 2) Please detail all variations to grants (ie reductions, rephasing etc) that have occurred this financial year.
- 3) Has the department/agency been required to find any other savings in this financial year? Please detail all such savings.

Answer:

N/A