

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

Question No: 228

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: Page 121 (29/5/13)

Topic: Take Up Rates

Senator McKenzie asked:

Senator Conroy: One of the other reasons that I did start asking questions of you, Senator McKenzie, was that I thought your characterisation, particularly if it was based on outdated information, was just fundamentally wrong in terms of take-up. They are world leading take-up rates.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: They might be world leading, Minister, but 'world leading' is a description, not a fact, and you might try to address that.

Senator Conroy: They are world leading if you compare it to dial-up, ADSL, HFC or even Verizon fibres.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Do you want to tell us the take-up rate for South Hobart?

Senator Conroy: I do not have it handy because I got confused between South Morang being in Hobart, and South Hobart.

Senator McKENZIE: Can I have the take-up rate for Morang and South Hobart.

Senator Conroy: I will see if I can find the information during the course of the evening for you. I am just looking at a very interesting chart here that NBN Co. published.

Answer:

Take-up rates in localities – namely Fibre Serving Area Modules (FSAMs) - vary depending upon how long the network has been live in that area. The most appropriate measure is those FSAMs that have been in service the longest. In this regard, the Take-up rate in South Morang FSAM 03 at the end of July 2013 was 46.0 per cent and the Take-up rate in Hobart FSAM 01 at the same date was 29.1 per cent.

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Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Page 85 (30/5/13)

Topic: Telstra Pits - Asbestos

Senator Xenophon asked:

Mr Quigley: In doing this rollout we are dealing with the pit and duct network, which has been there for a very long time. We are well aware that there are asbestos-containing materials in that ducted pit network. We do have to deal with asbestos-containing materials.

Senator XENOPHON: And does dealing with it sometimes involve ripping it up?

Mr Quigley: It may be, in some cases that it is the best thing to do if a pit is too badly damaged. The vast majority of the instances of dealing with pits that are badly damaged fall with Telstra because we are paying them for the job of remediation, but we cannot guarantee in every single case that there will not be one of our contractors dealing with a pit. It could be.

Senator XENOPHON: Telstra tells me that they handed it over sometime in February, in Seaford—

Mr Quigley: It could be. Generally Telstra remediate a whole area. It looks like this pit may have been missed in that. Syntheo, who was our contractor, would have taken on that remediated network and this pit might have been missed.

Senator XENOPHON: Could you take this on notice. My understanding is that Seaford was one area that was handed to NBN and that they had a role in remediating or dealing with those pits.

Mr Quigley: It could be, that is for sure.

Senator XENOPHON: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Quigley: Yes.

Senator XENOPHON: In this case, what shocked Mr Francis, a builder with many years experience, was the cavalier way that they were dealing with it. They were subcontractors—Ellers—for Syntheo. My concern is whether you have considered this in a legal sense: to what extent is NBN Co. responsible for loss or damage suffered by individuals—and the latency period for asbestos could be up to 40 years or 50 years in some cases—as a result of conduct by its contractors and subcontractors?

Mr Quigley: I will have to take that on notice. Can I say, it is not surprising that the individual, if he found such a pit on his property, was very shocked. I think we would all be shocked.

Senator XENOPHON: Will Mr Francis be given the details of that critical incident investigation, since it was his block of land and he was in the vicinity of the asbestos that was broken up?

Mr Quigley: I can certainly take that on board. We obviously have a copy of the critical incident report, which we insist on from Syntheo, and if it is possible to give it to him we will do that.

Senator XENOPHON: Will it be given to him or not?

Mr Quigley: I cannot answer that now.

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Answer:

In early March 2013 NBN Co's contractor Syntheo remediated some pits in the Seaford FSAMs in South Australia. Part of its' work activities included accessing pits and undertaking pit replacements in order to house NBN Co assets. The Seaford sites were handed over from Telstra in February and March 2013.

The report in this case is a Syntheo document and we would refer Mr Francis to Syntheo should he wish to obtain a copy.

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Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: Pg 86 (30/5/13)

Topic: Asbestos – Legal Liability

Senator Xenophon asked:

So they will be kept. But, given the concerns that have been raised about asbestos, are there steps to obtain legal advice about what the potential is over the years for NBN Co., and therefore the Commonwealth, in respect of this?

Mr Quigley: It is not something that I have put a priority on at this point. What I have been putting a priority on is making sure that we are taking the steps necessary to ensure our contractors are not exposing their workers, their subcontractors or the general public. That is where we have been putting the focus. I can take on notice the question you have asked, but to be honest I have not looked at legal liability as the first priority.

Senator XENOPHON: No, and I appreciate that, but I am just asking is that something that will be looked at in due course?

Mr Quigley: Yes, I certainly can look at that.

Answer:

Where NBN Co forms the view that it is necessary to obtain legal advice about any potential liability (including in relating to asbestos) it will obtain any advice it considers necessary at the appropriate time.

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Question No: 231

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 87 (30/5/13)

Topic: Asbestos – Investigations

Senator Xenophon asked:

So just to clarify this, you have made it clear that Comcare inspectors are investigating what occurred in terms of the systems of Telstra and its contractors in Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria. Will there also be an investigation by Comcare inspectors of what occurred with respect to NBN and its contractors in South Australia and Western Australia?

Senator Conroy: As I said to you, in Western Australia—

Senator XENOPHON: Alright, in South Australia then?

Senator Conroy: My understanding is that in Western Australia it happened at the time. There were two different incidents in Perth. In one Comcare, was called in and it was, I think, Telstra workers. There was an issue where I do not whether or not Comcare inspectors were called in. I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you. It was in Vic Park.

Answer:

There were two alleged incidents in Western Australia in 2013. The first occurred at Mandurah where suspected asbestos containing material was found on rubble within a compound managed by Syntheo. The second incident was at a Syntheo work site in Teague Street, Victoria Park. Comcare attended and inspected the site. Comcare is not investigating NBN Co in relation to this incident at Teague Street and we have received no further advice from their local office on the matter.

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Question No: 232

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Hansard Ref: Pg 88 (30/5/13)

Topic: Occupational health and safety reports

Senator Xenophon asked:

I have to finish up now. On notice, can you give us details, without details of who said what, of the sorts of complaints, or the sorts of reports, you have had, including occupational health and safety complaints?

Mr Quigley: In fact, most of them are occupational health and safety reports because they are related to strikes where there could potentially be an injury.

Senator Conroy: And you are talking about asbestos specifically.

Senator XENOPHON: About oc health and safety and asbestos particularly.

Mr Quigley: Okay.

Senator CONROY: It is just that oc health and safety across the country on a project this size is an enormous—

Senator XENOPHON: Asbestos—

Senator Conroy: And asbestos could be done relatively quickly and easily.

Senator XENOPHON: Asbestos particularly would be useful

Answer:

NBN Co has received multiple notifications from its contractors/members of the public in relation to asbestos/potential asbestos issues. These issues range from whether buildings belonging to end users contain asbestos to the wind damage done to a wall that may have contained asbestos to other potential discoveries of asbestos by NBN Co contractors in the course of rolling out the network.

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Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 88

Topic: Participant workbook, NBN safety and awareness course book

Senator Abetz asked:

I understand that NBN Co. has a *NBN safety & awareness course* participant workbook. Is anybody aware of such a document or publication?

Mr Quigley: We have quite a number of documents on safety. Have you got the document there?

Senator ABETZ: No, I do not have the document.

Mr Quigley: If you had it, I might recognise it. What was it again?

Senator ABETZ: 'Participant workbook, NBN safety and awareness course book'. The criticism that has been made of it is that there are only two pages in it dealing with the issue of asbestos. I am just wondering if NBN and the officials here are aware of that document or whether that document might have been potentially created by somebody else dealing with the NBN rollout.

Mr Quigley: We have a range of documents. We also have a range of courses.

Senator ABETZ: Can anybody help us? Do we have such a participant workbook?

Senator Conroy: I was a little bit confused. Were you implying that it was an NBN produced document or not an NBN produced document?

Senator ABETZ: I have been advised that it is an NBN Co. document; however, I am only going on advice and therefore I am willing to countenance the possibility that the advice I have been given by a punter may be incorrect.

Senator Conroy: I get the sense, from the looks at the table, that nobody has a copy handy, but we can take any questions on notice.

Senator ABETZ: If you can take that on notice, then tell us how much of that is devoted to asbestos handling.

Senator Conroy: Is there are particular size of the number of pages you believe—

Senator ABETZ: Two pages, I was told.

Senator Conroy: No, I was asking whether there was a number of pages that you thought was a more appropriate number. Is 10 appropriate, 20?

Senator ABETZ: I am the one asking the questions. I just want confirmation.

Senator Conroy: I just wanted to understand you question, that is all.

Senator ABETZ: It is whether or not there were only two pages devoted to asbestos handling. It is a very simple question and the answer will be either yes or no. If the answer is no, could you then take on notice how many pages were, if any, devoted to the issue of asbestos handling.

Mr Quigley: Certainly, we can. Just to give you some reassurance, Senator, our complete occupational health and management system is accredited to the Australian Standard 4801. So all of the documents we produce around our occupational health and safety measures had been through the appropriate Australian Standards accreditation process.

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Answer:

The NBN Co Safety & Awareness Course participant handbook is a general safety course that provides workers with a nationally consistent introduction to the National Broadband Network. It ensures workers are trained to a minimum standard of Health, Safety & Environment and Cabling Provider Rules made by the ACMA. The course aims to also raise worker awareness for key topics, including fibre optic cable, asbestos and others. It does not address the handling and removal of asbestos.

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Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 89

Topic: Tier 1 contractors

Senator Abetz asked:

Yes, but when the NBN let the contract, the unsuspecting punter, if they were told you are just going to put in some cable and dig some ditches, chances are that was wrong. They would in fact be told that they would have to do a bit more than that, including potentially removing asbestos. One would have imagined that that would be part of the contract.

Mr Quigley: It is quite a substantial part of our contract. The tier 1 contract is related to issues of occupational health and safety.

Senator Conroy: So tier 1 contractors—

Senator ABETZ: Including asbestos?

Mr Quigley: Of course.

Senator ABETZ: And it was in that context that I was—

Senator Conroy: Yes, so let me assist. Tier 1 contractors are required to comply with all applicable laws and to meet a range of health and safety and environmental obligations under their contracts. Not doing so would likely constitute a breach of contract, and in these situations NBN Co.'s remedies include rights to issue a notice to their contractors to immediately rectify this: to immediately suspend activities in question, step in and rectify—that is, bring in environmental experts—and seek full compensation for costs. They are just some of the things that are in there, but we will get you further information.

Answer:

It is standard for NBN Co's construction contracts to contain extensive Work Health & Safety (WHS) provisions covering:

- (a) compliance with WHS laws;
- (b) WHS management systems and plans;
- (c) subcontractor compliance with WHS laws/ management systems; and
- (d) training and obtaining of accreditations.

In addition to the extensive WHS clauses in the contracts, NBN Co has developed Critical Risk Controls which define NBN Co's requirements for managing key health, safety and environment risks. We provide these Critical Risk Controls to contractors to highlight critical risks that need to be properly managed. The Critical Risk Controls contain provisions dealing specifically with asbestos (and how those risks should be managed).

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Question No: 235

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: Pg 90 (30/5/13)

Topic: Comcare investigators - Asbestos

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator Conroy: He was involved. I do not think he called in Comcare; I think he called in a camera. But I think Comcare was called in—

Senator ABETZ: So it varies from case to case?

Senator Conroy: So Comcare in this instance, which had nothing—as I said, NBN was not involved in it. But I think possibly even Gary Gray might have called in Comcare. From my recollection of some discussions, although I could be doing him a disservice, Don Randall called in the photographers, Gary Gray, I think, called in the Comcare investigators. In Victoria Park, I think following—we can take it on notice.

Senator ABETZ: Okay, just take them all on notice.

Senator Conroy: I am happy to take them on notice.

Answer:

Notifications to Comcare are required in the event of a notifiable incident as defined by the Work Health and Safety Act (WHS Act). This includes a serious injury or illness, a dangerous incident or a death). In the case of Victoria Park which NBN Co did not consider was a 'notifiable incident' under the WHS Act, NBN Co made Comcare aware of this incident as a courtesy.

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Question No: 236

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 92

Topic: NBN Co contractors – 457 Visas

Senator Ludlum asked:

I suspect we may come back to this issue later in the evening. I just want to turn to some of the other issues that you mentioned in your opening statement but also come to the issues of contractors and subcontractors, because it is one of the things that was also blamed when the company suffered pretty significant delays that were announced between last December and whenever we were last in Sydney, in March or April. You mentioned a number of 3,650 contractors that had done safety training. Is that the total compliment of sub-contractors working through various companies for NBN Co?

Mr Quigley: I cannot give you the exact number, but our aim is to put every single contractor and subcontractor who works on the NBN through those courses, so I think it would be very close to that number. Obviously, day by day it changes, but that would be roughly the number.

Mr Steffens: Correct.

Senator LUDLAM: How many of those are on 457 visas? Do you have any figures on that?

Mr Quigley: I do not know. I would have to take that one on notice.

Senator LUDLAM: Are you likely to be able to find out? I guess I cannot ask you to judge likelihood, but would your top-tier contractors have that information? If they do, do you know whether they would pass that on to NBN Co?

Mr Quigley: I would have to take that on notice. I do know that there have been some specialised skills that have come in from overseas. For example, ribbon splicing would be an area.

Senator LUDLAM: I could understand why that was the case, because I do not imagine there was a very big jobs market for that in Australia until you turned up.

Senator Conroy: I think we were the first to deploy ribbon fibre.

Senator LUDLAM: There is a lot of skilled labour involved here; there is also a lot of semiskilled labour. Across what categories would you be able to identify the proportion of your workforce that is on those visas?

Mr Quigley: I do not have that—

Senator LUDLAM: I understand you do not have it at the table.

Mr Quigley: We will take it on notice.

Answer:

Due to the total numbers of contractors and sub-contractors working on the project, it is very difficult for NBN Co and its Tier One contractors to collect accurate data on the numbers of workers on 457 Visas at any point in time.

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Question No: 237

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 95 (30/5/13)

Topic: Maintenance and handling of asbestos

Senator Birmingham asked:

I have some questions on asbestos. Mr Quigley, when did NBN Co. first become aware of issues surrounding the maintenance and handling of asbestos by NBN Co. or Telstra contractors?

Senator Conroy: In which instance, or are you saying in every instance?

Senator BIRMINGHAM: In the first instance.

Senator Conroy: We would have to take that on notice.

Mr Quigley: I can give a general answer, Minister. We have anticipated from the beginning of the project that we would have to deal with asbestos-containing material. That is the nature of the network that exists in the ground today, as it does, by the way, in lots of other infrastructure—fences, houses, all sorts of things. We anticipated we would have to deal with it, therefore we put the procedures in place as we developed our occupational health and safety system.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: So when was the first time you became aware that those procedures had not been appropriately followed?

Mr Quigley: I would have to look up in our register when the very first incident was that we have of an asbestos related report. That may not necessarily be an incident; it could be a procedural issue, as we talked about in Tasmania. But I would have to check on that.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I appreciate there are logs of procedural issues, and it is important in terms of keeping the holistic approach to managing your occupational health and safety issues intact that that is done. Are we talking, in terms of more serious issues, days, weeks or months when you first became aware of issues that alerted a concern that has led to the types of discussions and engagements that have obviously happened in the last day or two?

Mr Quigley: I know of, obviously, the incident that took place that was referred to by Senator Xenophon in South Australia. I would have to check our logs to see if there was any incident where there was something like that earlier. I simply cannot answer that one off the top of my head.

Answer:

The first instance of any asbestos related issue we became aware of was in September 2010 in Smithton, Tasmania.

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Question No: 238

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 96 (30/5/13)

Topic: Maintenance and handling of asbestos

Senator Birmingham asked:

In a location like Ballarat, where Telstra remediation work is happening on the ground and NBN Co. rollout is happening on the ground simultaneously, how short can the time frame get between indicating to Telstra that you need access to these pits and Telstra having to hand them over?

Mr Quigley: We start to do the work, the subsequent work, to remediation only after Telstra has handed them over to us and they finish that work. I know of no instance where we were simultaneously or concurrently working on the same pits.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: How short can the time notice get?

Mr Quigley: I do not know. That is a scheduling issue and will vary all over the place

Senator Conroy: We are happy to take it on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Again, unless Mr Steffens or somebody else is able to answer—

Mr Steffens: The remediation activities in FSAMs vary widely. It can be that Telstra hands over areas within six to eight weeks, and sometimes it takes substantially longer. It typically depends on the volume of work required in the area to be remediated.

Senator Conroy: I think he is saying it is on a site-by-site basis.

Answer:

The average time taken between Telstra completing remediation and our Delivery Partners mobilizing to site is 39 days.

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Question No: 239

Program No: NBN Co

Hansard Ref: Pg 98-99 (30/5/13)

Topic: Penrith Council Asbestos

Senator Birmingham asked:

Minister, have you or the department or NBN Co. received correspondence from Penrith council in relation to the asbestos issue?

Senator Conroy: I believe a letter has been sent. I have not seen it yet. I have been in estimates all day but I think my office has informed me that we have received a letter. As I have been here almost all day and even in meetings in the breaks all day I have not had a chance to read the letter myself yet.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: And if you have not read it you certainly have not dealt with it or responded to it.

Senator Conroy: No, but I understand there is a meeting tonight in Penrith being attended by residents, Comcare and possibly Telstra, and I believe the local member, David Bradbury, is also attending.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Will NBN Co. or the department have any representatives there?

Senator Conroy: As it is the department's estimates, most of the department are here. I cannot speak for NBN Co.; I am not sure.

Mr Quigley: Not that we know of. We may but we will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

As at 30 June NBN Co had not received correspondence from Penrith Council in relation to the asbestos issue. Nor did a representative of NBN Co attend the meeting.

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Question No: 240

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 100

Topic: NBN Co Board

Senator Birmingham asked:

How has the board, since Ms McKenna became chair, reinforced to management their accountability to the board? Have there been any particular changes in the way management is expected to present their accountability to the board under Ms McKenna?

Senator Conroy: I am happy to take on notice—

Answer:

In addition to a 12-month Forward Schedule on compliance topics, the Chairman has recently introduced a Forward Schedule that identifies key operational topics for future meetings on a rolling monthly basis for the following four meetings.

Management prepare clear, concise and timely reports for each Board meeting based on these Forward schedule(s).

In reviewing these reports with management, NBN Co's Directors actively engage with the operation of the business, raise issues, express concerns and where appropriate provide guidance to management.

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Question No: 241

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 101 (30/5/2013)

Topic: NBN Co Board

Senator Birmingham asked: Mr Quigley, have you changed the presentation of management reports to the board since Ms McKenna?

Senator Conroy: I have already taken that question on notice as I am entitled to. Would you like to ask another question?

Answer:

Management reports have continued to evolve to manage the substantial increase in scale and coverage of the rollout. These reports track the key operational and financial metrics in meeting the business objectives described in the Corporate Plan. Management reports measure progress on a weekly basis for each technology, each region and each Delivery Partner.

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Question No: 242

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 101 (30/5/13)

Topic: Performance review – Mr Quigley

Senator Birmingham asked: Has Mr Quigley had a performance review since Ms McKenna was appointed?

Senator Conroy: I will take that on notice. I would expect that all executives of NBN Co. go through performance reviews.

Answer:

All senior executives (including the Chief Executive Officer) and employees have received an annual performance review for FY2012-13 consistent with company policies. The Chairman on behalf of the Board is responsible for conducting the annual performance review for the Chief Executive Officer.

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Question No: 243

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 102 (30/5/13)

Topic: Term of Mr Quigley's appointment

Senator Birmingham asked: When does Mr Quigley's appointment as chief executive require reappointment.

Senator Conroy: For accuracy—and I am not trying to be difficult, Senator Birmingham—I am happy to take that question on notice. We do not know the answer.

Mr Clarke: It is in fact a matter for the board.

Senator Conroy: It is a matter for the board, so I will happily ask Ms McKenna. I will take that on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Once again, I am pretty sure that Mr Quigley would know when his contract is up.

Senator Conroy: I want to make sure that I get you an exact date.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I am quite happy with a year.

Senator Conroy: I would rather give you the exactly correct answer, Senator Birmingham.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: What year does Mr Quigley's appointment as chief executive—

Senator Conroy: I have no idea. I will get the exact answer for you, Senator Birmingham. I do not know the answer to the question.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Once again, the gentleman sitting to your right does, I am sure.

Senator Conroy: I have taken it on notice.

Answer:

Consistent with industry practice, Mr Quigley's employment contract is subject to standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions include defined notice periods for the termination of his contract in lieu of a fixed term of engagement.

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Question No: 244

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 114 (30/5/13)

Topic: NBN Co - telecommunications revenue

Senator Joyce asked:

I noted in the last year's financial statements that the telecommunications revenue is just shy of \$2 million, yet the travel expense is in excess of \$12 million—six times, actually, what you have earned. In your current revenue projections, are you on target? What are your current revenue projections, year to date, as we speak?

Mr Quigley: What I can tell you, is we are slightly ahead of our revenue projections. As you would understand, when you are building an infrastructure project such as this, you spend a fair amount of money upfront as then, as you connect customers, the revenue grows. That is what most business—

Senator Conroy: Did you know Telstra built and paid for their towers for 4G before they had a single customer?

Senator JOYCE: I know you are nervous about the next budget nightmare. If you are a competent hand at the tiller here, Minister, you would be able to tell me the revenue you have received, year to date, as to where we are at the moment. So what is it?

CHAIR: I do not think we should play silly games.

Senator JOYCE: This is a very serious question. What is your revenue, year to date?

Senator Conroy: I believe Mr Quigley just answered your question.

CHAIR: Senator Joyce, do not play silly games.

Senator JOYCE: He said it was ahead of forecast, but he did not tell me what it was.

Senator Conroy: Are you still trying to work out the difference between gross debt and net debt? Are you still struggling on that?

Senator JOYCE: You are under the pump, aren't you?

Senator Conroy: I see sweat on your forehead. That Tony Windsor has got you spooked. Armadale is not as friendly as you thought.

Senator JOYCE: This is as close as I have ever been to a circus, watching you.

Senator Conroy: Have you got a question that makes sense?

Senator JOYCE: I want the answer to this question; I really do.

Senator Conroy: We can take it on notice for you. Fire away.

Senator JOYCE: I just asked the question. You cannot answer it?

Senator Conroy: We will take it on notice.

Answer:

Telecommunication revenue for the period of 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 was \$14.1m.

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Question No: 245

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 115 (30/5/13)

Topic: NBNCo finances

Senator Joyce asked:

Where have you got that money? It is the nation's money. Where have you got the nation's money invested?

Senator Conroy: The nation's money!

Mr Quigley: In a variety of banks. They are all AA plus rated.

Senator JOYCE: What sort of return are we getting on that?

Senator Conroy: I would have to take that on notice. I am sure Mr Quigley does not have it handy.

Answer:

NBN Co's Treasury department ensures that sufficient funds are available to meet the operational and capital requirements of the NBN Group. Funds determined to be surplus to immediate requirements are available for investment. Surplus money is held in term deposits with banks. The majority of funds are invested with Australian banks with an S&P rating of AA minus or above. No funds are invested with any institution with an S&P rating below A minus.

At 30 April 2013 the average return on the funds invested was 4.13 per cent.

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Question No: 246

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 118 (30/5/13)

Topic: Liabilities

Senator Joyce asked:

Your trade and other payables at this point in time is what figure—in your liabilities?

Mr Payne: I would have to take that on notice. I do not know it off the top off my head.

Answer:

As at 31 May NBN Co's total liabilities were \$1.86bn of which trade and other payables comprised:

- Current - \$574.5m
- Non-current - \$0.5m

Current trade and other payables include supplier invoices on hand not paid for goods or services associated with the build and operation of the NBN and items receipted or accrued but yet to be invoiced by the supplier.

	31-May-13	31-Dec-12	30-Jun-12
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	574,502	380,489	276,991
Other financial liabilities	28,182	17,113	4,942
Derivative financial liability	-	3,542	-
Provisions	22,329	21,114	16,265
Total current liabilities	625,013	422,258	298,198
Non-current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	466	-	-
Other liabilities	40,885	-	-
Other financial liabilities	1,170,503	636,569	232,441
Derivative financial liability	-	6,751	-
Provisions	23,108	16,698	12,446
Total non-current liabilities	1,234,961	660,018	244,887
Total liabilities	1,859,974	1,082,276	543,085

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Question No: 247

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 119 (30/5/13)

Topic: Hedging

Senator Joyce asked:

What are you currently holding in derivatives and financial assets?

Mr Payne: They relate to forward foreign exchange contracts that we have—hedges against some of our large US dollar denominated contracts, such as the satellite purchases.

Senator JOYCE: What price did you hedge at?

Mr Payne: There are a variety of prices.

Senator JOYCE: Can you give me the scope? What is the average price you have hedged at?

Mr Payne: We would have to take that on notice.

Senator JOYCE: You don't have any idea about the average price you have hedged at?

Mr Payne: We have entered into these hedges over a period of a couple of years, so it is quite extended.

Senator JOYCE: So your coverage is for what amount of money?

Mr Payne: I think we have about \$800 million open at the moment.

Senator JOYCE: \$800 million open.

Senator Conroy: The cost of a couple of satellites.

Senator JOYCE: And at what point in time did you start hedging that?

Mr Payne: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

In February 2012 NBN Co entered into a series of foreign exchange contracts to hedge the USD exchange risk arising from a satellite contract with Space Systems Loral. Of the contract's USD 577 million value, USD 571 million was hedged at a cost of \$A566 million.

NBN Co has subsequently entered into a number of other foreign exchange contracts to hedge the USD exposure arising from the satellite program and other USD-denominated equipment contracts.

As at 30 April 2013 outstanding Foreign exchange hedges were approximately \$A810 million.

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Question No: 248

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 120 (30/5/13)

Topic: NBN Co receivables

Senator Joyce asked:

How much is in your receivables currently? You had about a million dollars at the end of last year, which seems rather low. So what are your current receivables? You must know that.

Mr Payne: I do not have the number on me.

Senator JOYCE: You do not know that either?

Mr Payne: Not off the top of my head, no.

Senator Conroy: We can take it on notice, Senator Joyce.

Senator JOYCE: You are at estimates. You are the senior financial officer, aren't you?

Mr Payne: Yes.

Senator JOYCE: Property, plant and equipment? That is static; you should know that. You must have done reconciliation

Senator Conroy: Senator Joyce, you would have to have the entire financial accounts to be able to answer all of these questions.

Senator JOYCE: I am talking to the senior financial officer and minister and the CEO. I thought that one of them might know.

Mr Payne: We obviously have all of that information, but I do not have all of that information at my fingertips.

Senator JOYCE: You do not have that information either.

Senator Conroy: We are happy to take it on notice for you, Senator Joyce.

Senator JOYCE: What information have brought with yourself tonight?

CHAIR: That question is so wide—

Senator Conroy: It is being rude and obnoxious. Now, we are happy to take it on notice, Senator Joyce. Is there another question you would like to ask? Would you like to ask the cost of borrowings for Malcolm Turnbull's FTTN plan?

Answer:

As at 31 May 2013, NBN Co's total assets were \$5.4bn, of which current trade and other receivables were \$28.8m. This includes trade receivables for the provision of telecommunication services (\$2.5m), interest receivable (\$8.7m), GST receivable (\$16.6m) and other receivables (\$1m) however excludes prepayment.

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Property, plant and equipment as at 31 May 2013 was \$3.3bn (including construction in progress)

	31-May-13	31-Dec-12	30-Jun-12
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	820,028	689,184	778,952
Trade and other receivables	28,786	26,877	26,865
Inventories	5,575	3,944	1,672
Derivative financial assets	21,209	662	11,938
Held to maturity investment	546,786	102,762	75,000
Other current assets	30,985	22,460	21,452
Total current assets	1,453,370	845,889	915,878
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	380	315	1,029
Derivative financial assets	14,189	792	10,528
Property, plant & equipment	3,278,569	2,107,246	1,027,745
Intangible assets	606,124	561,294	504,162
Other non current assets	6,343	7,330	8,068
Total non-current assets	3,905,604	2,676,977	1,551,532
Total assets	5,358,974	3,522,865	2,467,410

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Question No: 249

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: 120–121 (30/5/13)

Topic: Contingent Employee Liabilities

Senator Joyce asked:

And in regard to your contractors, obviously your superannuation is paid up to date?

Mr Payne: That is all included, yes.

Senator JOYCE: Do you have any other contingent employee liabilities?

Mr Payne: For things like long service leave—

Senator JOYCE: Long service leave.

Mr Payne: We do, yes. I do not know if I have that exact balance with me. In fact, I am pretty sure I do not have that level of detail. We would have to take that on notice.

Senator JOYCE: For your salary and wage component, what has your average sick leave been in days? Would it be 10 per employee?

Mr Payne: I do not have that detail.

Senator JOYCE: It runs at about 10 days. I am just trying to work out what it is in your company. It is always a sign of, basically, the morale and the attitude inside the company.

CHAIR: I think that is a bit simplistic and naïve to be honest, but anyway.

Mr Quigley: We can get you that information, Senator.

Answer:

1a. Employee liabilities as at 31 May 2013

Long service leaves balance - \$4.1m

Annual leave balance - \$16.7m

Total employee liabilities reported on balance sheet - **\$20.8m**

1b. Contingent employee liabilities on termination as at 31 May 2013

Annual leave on termination - \$16.7m

Provision for bonus on termination - \$4.6m

Total employee liabilities termination reported on balance sheet - **\$21.3m.**

2. For the period of July 2012 to May 2013 the average sick days taken per employee was 1.5 days.

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Question No: 250

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 123 (30/5/13)

Topic: MYEFO

Senator Birmingham asked:

To what extent is the brownfields rollout reprofiled over the next three years now compared to what was forecast in the MYEFO that was handed down late last year?

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

Answer:

The MYEFO forecast for the Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) Access network is based on the 2012-15 Corporate Plan that was released in August 2012. On 21 March 2013, NBN Co announced a revision to the forecast deployment profile.

The revised deployment profile forecast a total of 155,000 to 175,000 FTTP Access Premises Passed as at 30 June 2013. The reprofiled FTTP Brownfields Rollout to 30 June 2016 is currently undergoing review as part of our Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 to be considered by Government. However, it should be noted that the forecast project completion for the FTTP Access network remains FY2021.

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Question No: 251

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: Pg 124 (30/5/13)

Topic: Equity Injection

Senator Birmingham asked:

And with \$3½ billion less equity injection, I would not have thought that you would be able to.

Senator Conroy: It is more about sustainability of the build and the expectation of what the sector could manage.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I find it hard to believe that a slower housing market and a three-month delay constitutes \$3½ billion less equity funding for the next three years.

Senator Conroy: We cannot help it if you do not understand the questions you are being fed. We cannot help you.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Come on, Senator Conroy.

Senator Conroy: We cannot help you if you do not understand the questions you are being fed.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: So a slowdown in the housing market and three months of delay by NBN Co. is worth \$3½ billion?

Mr Quigley: There a lot of other factors that we have looked at.

Senator Conroy: We are happy to take that on notice and to try to give you a more detailed explanation to assist your understanding. I say that to you quite genuinely.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: When do you think we might get that detailed explanation if you take the question on notice? Would you be willing to give the committee some level of undertaking about when that might actually be returned, noting that we got 80 answers tonight to questions taken on notice last February?

Senator Conroy: Really? I used to get them after estimates was finished. That is amazing, I cannot believe you have them before and I am shocked! I used to get them tabled, literally, at the end of an estimates meeting. Can you believe that?

Senator BIRMINGHAM: You are going to take it on notice and bury it until after the election, aren't you?

Senator Conroy: Can you believe that? You clearly do not understand the questions you are being fed.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: You are going to take it on notice and bury it.

Senator Conroy: I am offering to take it on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: If I have the question so wrong, then you can give us the answers quickly, can't you?

Senator Conroy: Hopefully, on this one we can relatively quickly. Would you like us to take it on notice to try to assist you?

CHAIR: Senator Birmingham and Senator Conroy, I have been very patient. Senator Birmingham, unless you have questions, the question will be taken on notice.

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Answer:

The 2012-15 Corporate Plan assumed equity funding of \$22.2 billion from FY2013 to FY2016.

This equity funding requirement was based on the assumptions contained in the 2012-15 Corporate Plan, including, inter alia, assumptions relating to the speed at which the various components of the NBN would be built, the level of activity in the new housing market, the timing of when costs will be incurred and the level of cash balances that NBN Co would hold from time to time.

Since publication of the 2012-15 Corporate Plan, NBN Co has reviewed and revised a wide range of assumptions, including in relation to the above matters. The combined effect of these revisions has been to reduce the amount of Government equity required by NBN Co in the early years of the rollout.

The forecast peak equity funding requirement remains at \$30.4 billion, consistent with the 2012-15 Corporate Plan.

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Question No: 252

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 126 (30/5/13)

Topic: Fibre premises passed

Senator Birmingham asked:

That is probably fair enough for that. I want to ask about the rate of contracting at present in terms of the totality of the project. Let us start with what actually has been achieved. Of the raw numbers you have given us tonight, in terms of the number of fibre premises that have been passed what percentage is that of the total target number of premises to be passed?

Mr Quigley: Are you talking about to mid-2021?

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Correct.

Mr Quigley: You have to divide the number we have given you by roughly 11 million.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: We can do that. I am pleased to say. What number of premises passed have you contracted to have done?

Mr Quigley: That is I think on the public record. We have announced various deals with a number of suppliers and those numbers I think were in the press releases we went out with. I do not have the numbers off the top of my head.

Senator Conroy: It is all on the website.

Mr Quigley: It is on the website.

Senator Conroy: We can take it on notice or you can actually look up the website.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I can do that, Minister—

Senator Conroy: You could.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: but there are a bunch of senior executives from NBN Co. sitting at the table here tonight and—

Senator Conroy: They did not know that they would be asked about questions from two years ago.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I would have thought this was a pretty straightforward question. They are looking through their papers.

Mr Quigley: We have the information. We will certainly provide that information. They are all in the media releases. We simply have to add the numbers up.

Answer:

Contracts are in place with Delivery Partners covering approximately 1.92 million Fibre Access premises, representing approximately 18% of total Fibre Access premises (10.7 million) to be completed to FY2021.¹

¹ Refers to Brownfields LNDN (Single Dwelling Units and Multi-Dwelling Units), excludes Greenfields, Fixed Wireless and Satellite contracts. Includes growth in premises count since 2010.

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Question No: 253

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Pg 127 (30/5/13)

Topic: Contracted builds

Senator Birmingham asked:

In the media releases that you provided, can the number of contracted builds to be undertaken be broken down easily by the state on the data you have published?

Mr Quigley: Largely. The contracts we have placed generally at the state level we have nominated which state—

Mr Cooney: Absolutely.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: There seems to be a little bit of doubt on your side of the table, can you take on notice to provide please, in terms of contracts let to date for fibre rollout, what proportion of each state would be covered by the contracts already let?

Mr Quigley: Yes, we should be able to do that.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Thank you very much, Mr Quigley.

Answer:

As at 24 June 2013 contracted build awards amounted to approximately 1.92 million premises, broken down by state as follows¹:

State	Total Premises	Total Awarded	Total % Awarded
NSW	3,619,000	536,956	14.8
VIC	2,706,000	616,520	22.8
QLD	2,161,000	295,368	13.7
WA	1,134,000	141,819	12.6
SA	773,000	105,802	13.7
NT	76,000	38,643	51.0
TAS	236,000	189,016	80.1
Total	10,705,000	1,924,124	18.0%

¹ Refers to Brownfields LNDN (Single Dwelling Units and Multi-Dwelling Units), excludes Greenfields, Fixed Wireless and Satellite contracts. Includes growth in premises count since 2010.

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Question No: 254

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How many ongoing staff 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. 1,123 ongoing staff were recruited during the financial year to 30 June 2013. The staff members were classified as permanent.
2. 85 non ongoing staff were employed during the financial year to 30 June 2013. There is an additional 12 vacant non ongoing positions that exist, or have been created during the same period.
3. 121 employees have been employed on contract over the same period. The average length of their employment period is 4.7 months.

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Question No: 255

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

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

Answer:

1. 165 ongoing staff left NBN Co for the financial year to 30 June 2013. They were classified as permanent.
2. 16 non ongoing staff left NBN Co for the same period. They were classified as maximum term employees.
3. 67 contract staff left NBN Co for the same period. They were classified as contractors or labour hires.

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Question No: 256

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How many staff reductions/voluntary redundancies have occurred this financial year to date? What was the reason for these reductions?
2. Were any of these reductions involuntary redundancies? If yes, provide details.
3. Are there any plans for further staff reductions/voluntary redundancies? 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.
4. If there are plans for staff reductions, please give the reason why these are happening.
5. Are there any plans for involuntary redundancies? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

1. 11 staff members have been made redundant in the financial year to 30 June 2013. The staff members were classified as permanent and these reductions were non-voluntary redundancies related to structural changes within various teams.
2. Refer answer above.
3. There are no plans for broad reductions beyond isolated structural adjustments. There is no reduction target or plans to cut existing services/programs.
- 4-5.
In the case of isolated structural adjustments, individual roles are made redundant when responsibilities are no longer needed or can be absorbed.

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Question No: 257

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Public Service efficiencies

Senator Birmingham asked:

Please provide details of the amended operational efficiencies your agency will make as per 2013-14 Budget Measure 'Public Service efficiencies' (see 2013-14 Budget Paper No 2 p108).

In addition, please provide the following detail:

1. Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for savings achieved by implementing more efficient management structures, through a reduction in expenditure on staff across the Executive Level (EL) 1 and 2, and Senior Executive Service (SES) levels?
2. Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for savings achieved by revising down the occupational density target for all new leases, buildings and major fit-outs undertaken by agencies from 16 square metres per occupied workpoint down to 14 square metres?

Answer:

NBN Co is a Government Business Enterprise and is not subject to the efficiencies outlined in 2013-14 Budget Measure 'Public Service efficiencies' (see 2013-14 Budget Paper No 2 p108).

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Question No: 258

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Public Service efficiencies

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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 2013-14 Budget Measure 'Public Service efficiencies'

NBN Co minimises expenditure through established policies and procedures so as to ensure only necessary expenditure is incurred.

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Question No: 259

Program No: NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Printing Costs

Senator Birmingham:

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 involve an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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Question No: 260

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Graduate Recruitment

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Provide an update on expenditure for 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:

1. \$1,621.82 has been expended to date for the 2014 Graduate Recruitment program.
2. No travel has been incurred for the 2014 Graduate Recruitment program to date.

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Question No: 261

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: 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:

\$676,000 has been spent on above-the-line advertising to the end of April 2013.

1. NBN Co does not categorise advertising as 'campaign' or 'non-campaign'. The \$676,000 (above) includes:

- \$402,000 for Local-level Public Information advertising, regarding instruction, installation and how to order a service.
- \$106,000 for Community Information Session invitations and advertising.
- \$64,000 for public Demonstration advertising and invitations.
- \$59,000 for online communication.
- \$44,000 for national-level communications regarding the rollout schedule.

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.

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2. - 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.

Communications Program	Spend as at April 30, 2013	Details
Public Relations Program	1,729,000	Activities include responding to media enquiries, local rollout information, events management and staging costs.

7. NBN Co is planning communications programs to increase general consumer understanding of the NBN rollout and provide local public information regarding construction, ready for service and switchover dates in local areas.

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Question No: 262

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hospitality and Entertainment

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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?

Answer:

1. Entertainment spend for the period from 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 totalled \$104,725. To provide a detailed breakdown of this figure would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
2. Refer answer to Question 1. Hospitality expenses are included as part of the entertainment expenses.
3. Forecast entertainment spend for the period of 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 is \$116,650.
4. Refer answer to Question 3. Hospitality planned expenses are included as part of the entertainment planned expenses.
5. NBN Co always looks for ways to minimise its hospitality and entertainment expenditure. The company has established policies and procedures to ensure only necessary expenditure is incurred.

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Question No: 263

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Meeting costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. 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.
2. 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.

Answer:

1. NBN Co's meeting spend for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 was \$81,761. Available details of the breakup of this expenditure are set out in the table below. To attempt to provide additional level of details (date, location, purpose and cost of all events) would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Cost Centre	Meeting Expenses (A814100) Jul12 - May13 2012/13	Board Meeting Expenses (A815200) Jul12 - May13 2012/13	Total Meeting Expenses Jul12 - May13 2012/13
Chief Operating Officer (c11000)	20,399		20,399
Product Management & Industry Relations (C31000)	3,378		3,378
Reg Affairs & Ind Anlys (C31300)	5,357		5,357
Chief Executive Office (C61000)	1,196		1,196
Technology Organisation (C62000)	97		97
Finance (C63000)	59		59
Quality (C64125)	3,136		3,136
Corporate (c64000)	22,188		22,188
Communications (c71000)	16,150		16,150
NBN Board (C99000)		6,807	6,807
NBN Tas Board (C99118)		2,996	2,996
Total	71,958	9,803	81,761

2. The forecast spend on meetings for the period of 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 is \$89,713.

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Question No: 264

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 this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events, 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.

Answer:

This question is not applicable to NBN Co.

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Question No: 265

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? Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many and why? Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

1. No. NBN Co has a dedicated FOI officer who makes independent decisions regarding the company's 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.
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 to date, NBN Co received 30 FOI requests and had a further 3 requests on hand from FY 2011-2012, totalling 33 active FOI requests. Of the 22 FOI matters finalised in the year to date, 3 were released in full; 4 were released in part; 6 were denied; 7 were withdrawn. In relation to 2 applications, NBN Co held no documents. NBN Co completed all FOI requests within the processing deadlines outlined in the FOI Act and as per the OAIC's Guidelines.

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Question No: 266

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 (i.e. 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 for consultancies from 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 was \$39.1m.

Functions	\$m
Planning and Implementation (Various planning and implementation resource services)	13.2
CIO (Information technology support including BSS and OSS inception and design services)	8.2
Technology Organisation (External consulting services predominately relating to satellite and wireless activities)	4.4
Construction (Including detailed design services)	2.2
Quality (Including Business Readiness and Process Development support services)	1.5
Network Operations (Including BCM and Network Design Documents support services)	1.2
Product Management and Industry relations (Including access seeker on boarding)	1.2
Finance (External consulting services predominately relating to capitalisation of projects)	1.0
Chief Operations Officer (Including tactical delivery support)	1.0
Other Functions (< \$750k) includes Corporate Divisions such as Telstra Commercial, Security, Regulatory Affairs and Industry Analysis and HR etc.	5.2
Total	39.1

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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 the company's ability to function as a commercial entity.

2. Forecast spend on consultancies is \$42.3m for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. Forecast consultancies to the end of the calendar year are not available.

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: 267

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media monitoring

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What was the actual total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etc provided to the department/agency for this financial year to date?
 - a. Which agency or agencies provided these services?
 - b. What was 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:

1. The cost of media monitoring for 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 was \$124,634 (excluding GST).
 - a. Isentia Pty Limited (previously known as Media Monitors)
 - b. Estimate for 2012-13 is \$180,000
 - c. The cost of media monitoring for 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 was \$124,634.

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Question No: 268

Program No. NBN Co

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:

1. No
2. No. NBN Co reserves the right to monitor individual use of the internet should that be necessary.
3. NBN Co has not undertaken this analysis.

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Question No: 269

Program No.

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

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Question No: 270

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staff Amenities

Senator Birmingham asked:

What amenities are provided to staff? Provide a list, including any costs and the reason for providing the amenity.

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: 271

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Coffee Machines Purchased

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 has access?
6. 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?
7. What are the ongoing costs of the coffee machine, such as the cost of coffee?

Answer:

1. In addition to the information provided in Supplementary Estimates Hearings of October 2012 QoN 420, one additional coffee machine has been purchased.

Site	Type of machine	COST per unit ex GST	Number	Purchased
169 Varsity Parade, Varsity Lakes (Call Centre)	Jura Impressa X9	\$ 5,753.68	1	Aug 2012

- The ongoing cost of all NBN Co coffee machines is an average amount of \$5,167.33 per month.
2. The machines were purchased as an amenity for the offices in order to aid productivity by reducing time spent by staff purchasing coffee outside of their offices.
 3. NBN Co has not undertaken this analysis.
 4. The funding to purchase coffee machines came from the Capital Project Budgets for each individual project.
 5. Staff and authorised visitors are able to access the coffee machines.
 6. The Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance (using third party providers) of the coffee machines and to date this has been carried out on an as-required basis. The funding for maintenance comes from the Facilities Operating Expenses budget.
 7. See answer to Question 1.

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Question No: 272

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Coffee Machines Rented

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Does the department/agency rent coffee machines for staff usage? 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 are coffee machines rented?
3. 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?
4. Where does the funding for the coffee machines come from?
5. Who has access?
6. 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?
7. What are the ongoing costs of the coffee machine, such as the cost of coffee?

Answer:

NBN Co does not rent coffee machines for staff usage.

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Question No: 273

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Birmingham asked:

For this financial year to date:

1. 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).
2. 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).
3. 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).
4. 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).
5. 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).
6. 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).
7. 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).
8. 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).
9. Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.
10. 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 2012 Estimates hearing (QoN 421) remains accurate:

1-9) No

10) NBN Co publishes details on its website in relation to significant contracts related to the rollout of the national broadband network and the establishment of its corporate systems and processes. For example, details in relation to the ViaSat ground support satellite contract were published on 12 July 2012. To provide details in relation to all NBN Co contractors may constitute a breach of the confidentiality obligations in place between the parties.

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Question No: 274

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grants

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Could the department/agency provide an update 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.

Answer:

NBN Co does not administer grants.

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Question No: 275

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payment 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)?

1. 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)
2. 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?
3. 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: 276

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Stationery 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: 277

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?
2. Please provide a list of what channels and the reason for each channel.
3. What is the cost for this financial year to date?
4. What newspaper subscriptions does your department/agency have?
5. Please provide a list of newspaper subscriptions and the reason for each.
6. What is the cost for this financial year to date?
7. What magazine subscriptions does your department/agency have?
8. Please provide a list of magazine subscriptions and the reason for each.
9. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Answer:

- 1-3. 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 30 April 2013 financial year to date expenditure was \$11,722 + GST
- 4-6. NBN Co has subscriptions 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. As at 30 April 2013 financial year to date expenditure was \$16,425 + GST.
- 7-9. 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: 278

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Cost

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental/Agency officers that accompanied the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
2. 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 (such as incidentals). Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
3. What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
4. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
5. What is the policy for business class airfare tickets? Is there still a reduction in business flights as per the media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State dated 25 September 2012?
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

1. NBN Co officers were not involved in travel with the portfolio Ministers or Parliamentary Secretary in the 2012-13 financial year.
2. Travel expenses (excluding entertainment and fleet costs) for the period to 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 totalled \$10.2 million. This included international travel (\$0.2m), domestic travel (\$4.3m), rental cars (\$0.3m), taxis and trains (\$1.7m), parking (\$0.3m), hotels and meals (\$3.3m) and other travel related reimbursements (\$0.1m). A more detailed breakdown would involve an unnecessary diversion of resources. All interstate travel requires appropriate approval prior to bookings being made. All International travel requires CEO approval.
3. Travel expenses forecast (excluding entertainment and fleet costs) for the period 1 June 2013 to 30 June 2013 total \$1.4 million.

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4. Travel expenses forecast for the rest of this calendar year (from 1 June 2013 to 31 December 2013) totals \$9.6 million. This includes the expected forecast for June 2013 and the budgeted travel values for July 2013 to December 2013.
5. The policy for business class air travel is set out in NBN Co's Travel and Expense reimbursement Policy. All air travel (domestic and international) must be Economy Class unless approved by the CEO. First class travel is not permitted.
6. NBN Co previously had a limited number of Virgin Blue lounge memberships available for employees who are required to travel provided through the Velocity Rewards program and this will not be reimbursed by NBN Co. With the conclusion of the Virgin Australia contract, the Lounge Membership offer through NBN Co's corporate program is no longer available. A limited number of lounge memberships have been provided to employees by Qantas. Qantas offers NBN Co employees a status match for Gold and Platinum Virgin Frequent Flyer members at no cost. 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.
7. For the period 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 there have been four (4) Executive Assistants that have been required to travel with their executive for inter-state meetings. In each case the employee has been required to travel due to the volume of work performed. The cost of travel and accommodation incurred was \$4,139.
8. No.

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Question No: 279

Program No. NBN Co

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 31 May 2013, and for the YTD, the total fees paid to law firms for all legal and regulatory support services by the NBN Co was \$17.22mill (11 months inclusive: July 2012-May 2013 spend). The table below demonstrates the fees paid on a monthly average basis:

Time Period	External legal/regulatory support spend monthly average
July 2012-May 2013	\$1.57mill
FY 2011-12	\$1.79mill
FY 2010-11	\$2.89mill

2. NBN Co has not retained the Australian Government Solicitor during this period.
3. See answer to Q1.
4. Not applicable.

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Question No: 280

Program No.

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education expenses

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What is 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, 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 provides to eligible permanent employees assistance to complete the following learning and development opportunities:
 - a. Job based activities and assignments
 - b. Conferences and seminars
 - c. Professional memberships
 - d. Short Courses and Formal Study Programmes
 - e. Company provided training
 - f. Accreditations, certifications and professional qualifications
 - g. Educational assistance.
2. The education expense for the financial year to date as at 31 May 2013 was \$5,271,734. This includes all onboarding, compliance, technical accreditations safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, coaching, graduates, media and management training expenses.

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Question No: 281

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training

Senator Birmingham asked:

In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:

1. Total spending on these services
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
3. 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)
4. The names of all service providers engaged
5. For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), 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 (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)
6. 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 (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - 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 expense for the financial year to date as at 31 May 2013 was \$5,271,734. This includes all onboarding, compliance, technical accreditations safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, coaching, graduates, media and management training expenses.
- 2-6 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: 282

Program No. NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Training

Senator Birmingham asked:

In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:

1. Total spending on these services
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
3. 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)
4. The names of all service providers engaged
5. For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), 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)
6. 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:

The education expense for the financial year to date as at 31 May 2013 was \$5,271,734. This includes all on boarding, compliance, technical accreditations safety, systems, IT processes training along with leadership, coaching, graduates, 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: 283

Program No. NBN Co

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:

1. Staff accessing the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme is a private matter between the staff member and the Department of Human Services.
- 2-3. NBN Co's Paid Parental Leave scheme offers the primary care giver 14 weeks paid leave after 12 months continuous service. This can be taken at full pay or half pay. 14 staff have used the paid parental scheme this financial year to date. NBN Co also offers five (5) days paid support leave to the paternal parent.

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Question No: 284

Program No. NBN Co

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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Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 285

Program No: NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs

Senator Birmingham:

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. Taxi and train¹ expenditure for the period of 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 totalled \$1.71 million.

Cost Centre	Taxis/Train (A805220) Jul12 - May13 2012/13
Chief Operating Officer (C11000)	1,043,886
Product Management & Industry Relations (C31000)	80,757
Reg Affairs & Ind Anlys (C31300)	11,931
Chief Executive Office (C61000)	5,819
Technology Organisation (C62000)	62,515
Finance (C63000)	55,094
Quality (C64125)	51,065
Corporate (C64000)	293,057
Communications (C71000)	106,928
Total	1,711,052

2. NBN Co employees use taxis predominately when travelling interstate (e.g. from airport to NBN Co office), for travel to attend meetings where public transport is less efficient or unavailable, or where an NBNCo employee is required to work after 8pm.

Clause 6.4 of the Travel and Reimbursement Policy states the following:

Taxi fares going to and from business activities will be reimbursed. Receipts/Tax Invoices should be obtained for all journeys and attached to Expense Claims. Reimbursement for taxis home from the office for late work is permissible where a manager requests or authorises an employee/contractor to work back late (beyond 8pm) and the employee/contractor would be required to travel late on public transport.

¹ Expenditure includes both taxi and train expenditure

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Question No: 286

Program No: NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hire Cars

Senator Birmingham:

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. Hire cars within NBN Co refers to rental cars from companies such as Avis or Hertz where the cost of taxi fares would (for each day of the proposed hire) exceed the cost of a hire car.

Hire and rental car costs for the period of 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 (excluding fuel costs) totalled \$166,920.

Cost Centre	Rental Cars (A805210) Jul12 - May13 2012/13
Chief Operating Officer (C11000)	91,874
Product Management & Industry Relations (C31000)	203
Technology Organisation (C62000)	14,474
Finance (C63000)	330
Quality (C64125)	598
Corporate (C64000)	15,304
Tasmania (C69000)	75
Communications (C71000)	44,061
Total	166,920

2. NBN Co employees use hire cars to travel predominately from airports to NBN Co construction sites or to travel between their home office and NBN Co construction sites where other public transport is not available. The use of hire cars is preferred when the equivalent cost by other means of transport (such as taxi) is prohibitive.

Clause 6.2 and 6.5 of the NBN Co Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy states the following:

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NBN Co Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy - 6.2 Rental Cars

The cost of rental cars will be reimbursed where the cost of taxi fares would (for each day of the proposed hire) exceed the cost of a hire car. Cars must be booked by the NBN Co's Travel Management Company in order to access their preferential rates.

The class of vehicle to be booked is a medium sedan (or small sedan if no passengers are to be carried). Requirements for a vehicle other than those specified above must be approved by a member of Exco. The exception to this is for hire cars utilised in the absence of company provided tool of trade vehicles that must be fit for purpose (e.g., have appropriate storage capacity for HS&E and QA equipment). The lowest available cost option must be taken in these circumstances.

Collision Damage Insurance is included in NBN Co's rental agreements with Hertz and Avis and should be purchased for any other rental car companies required to be used.

To avoid high re-fuelling charges, staff are required to refuel prior to returning the vehicle to the drop-off depot. The costs of re-fuelling the rental car prior to drop-off will be reimbursed.

NBN Co Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy - 6.5 Chauffeur Driven Cars

The cost of chauffeur driven cars will not be reimbursed.

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Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 287

Program No: NBN Co

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Birmingham asked:

Provide a breakdown for each employment classification that has a corporate credit card. Please update details of the following?

1. What action is taken if the corporate credit card is misused?
2. How is corporate credit card use monitored?
3. What happens if misuse of a corporate credit card is discovered?
4. Have any instances of corporate credit card misuse have been discovered? List staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.
5. What action is taken to prevent corporate credit card misuse?

Answer:

1. Under NBN Co's Policy, employees may be subject to disciplinary action if they misuse a corporate credit card. NBN Co's corporate credit 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 then they are personally liable for the expenditure.
2. NBN Co's corporate credit cards are 'employee 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.
3. See answer to question 1.
4. There have been no reported instances of misuse.
5. 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 the cardholder's manager. Expense Claim Reports are then checked by independent Accounts Payable staff for compliance with relevant policies before payment is made.

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Question No: 288

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 .
For other facilities and in other locations where AGL is not present, NBN Co's electricity is provided by the local supplier.
2. Total costs of electricity for both offices and network facilities (1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013) is \$15,162,185

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Question No: 289

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Briefing for the Australian Greens and Independents

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Have any briefings and/or provision of information 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:

It is a vital part of NBN Co's communications activities to ensure local communities are informed about the NBN. This can include assisting members of local, state and federal governments with requests for information and briefings on NBN rollout. These requests can be commissioned in a number of ways, including through direct contact with NBN Co stakeholder relations officers or through Ministers' offices. This information can take many forms including background information relating to fibre, satellite or wireless, network rollout information in particular areas, schedules for the demonstration truck, or information relating to communications activities. It would be an unreasonable diversion of resources for NBN Co to attempt to compile a list of each briefing. It is not possible to quantify the time spent on such requests as they form part of the normal business operations for members of the stakeholder relations and communications teams.

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Question No: 290

Program No. NBN Co

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:

Two shredders were purchased between 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 at a cost of \$7,500 + GST per shredder for the destruction of commercially sensitive documents in accordance with the Protective Security Policy Framework. 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: 291

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 has worked towards compliance with the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) and as at 31 July 2013 achieved compliance for all requirements. This claim is justified through identification of auditable evidence of control design effectiveness and samples of implementation. An independent audit is currently being carried out to provide a formal opinion on this claim.

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: 292

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, Satellite Earth Stations etc)

Location	Leased or Owned	Size/SQM	Seating Capacity	Purchase Value	Gross Rent PSM/PA	Depreciation of buildings that are owned	Type of functions and work undertaken.
15 National Circuit Barton	Leased	260	11	NA	\$ 416.00	NA	Office
88 Walker St Nth Sydney	Leased	1242	130	NA	\$ 399.00	NA	Office
100 Arthur Nth Sydney	Leased	9,462	927	NA	\$ 662.00	NA	Office
360 Elizabeth St Melbourne	Leased	7,787	706	NA	\$ 569.00	NA	Office
39 Murray St Hobart TAS	Leased	209	15	NA	\$ 280.00	NA	Office
535 Bourke St Melbourne	Leased	2,230	230	NA	\$ 494.00	NA	Office
45 Cameron St Launceston	Leased	76	10	NA	\$ 769.00	NA	Serviced Office
54 Victoria Street Hobart	Leased	315	20	NA	\$ 230.00	NA	Office
50 Miller St – Nth Sydney	Leased	4,052	398	NA	\$ 449.00	NA	Office

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Question No: 293

Program No. NBN Co

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. How many ongoing staff, the classification, the type of work they undertake and their location.
 - b. How many non-ongoing staff, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location
 - c. How many contractors, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location
 - d. How many are graphic designers?
 - e. How many are media managers?
 - f. 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. As at 31 May 2013, NBN Co employed two media managers. They are among 64 full time employees whose remit is to broaden the community's awareness and understanding of the decade-long, nationwide upgrade to Australia's fixed-line telecommunications infrastructure.

This remit accords with NBN Co's 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. It is also in line with recommendations of the Joint Committee on the NBN regarding community consultation in remote and regional Australia.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- community relations officers who liaise with interest groups such as Australia's 565 local councils as well as relevant local community bodies;
- stakeholder officers who inform 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, including health and safety information, to NBN Co staff in every state and territory;
- online officers responsible for the NBN Co website and the company's presence in social and other online media outlets; and

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- 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: 294

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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.