

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No.EW0416_12

Senator Nash asked on 1/06/2011, Hansard page 52.

Question

NBN Setup

Ms Paul: I would like to check whether there had been a start date given. I am not sure there was a start date given or a target date, and the reason is that we would not have known what the result of a tender process would be. The tender process itself, for a backbone, would have elicited potential providers of a backbone, and in their tenders they would have had to say when their start dates might be. I will take that on notice, but I am not sure that there was a particular single date. ... Senator NASH: So under the NBN, when do you expect this to be operational? Ms Paul: I am not sure of that, and of course that is in the other portfolio, so can I take that on notice? I think that is probably the best thing to do.

Answer

There was no start date for the Vocational Education Broadband Network (VEN). While an indicative timeline of how the procurement process for the VEN would proceed was published on the Department's website, the time at which the VEN backbone network would have become operational would have been considered and negotiated in finalising the procurement process. This procurement process was not completed.

The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) has advised that through the progressive NBN rollout, TAFEs within the fibre footprint will be able to take up a connection once the network is deployed in their region.

DBCDE has confirmed that construction of the fibre network on the mainland first release sites is nearly complete, with customer trials launched in Armidale NSW on 18 May 2011, and trials to commence in the remaining first release sites (Kiama Downs and Minnamurra (NSW), Townsville (Qld), Willunga (SA) and Brunswick (Vic)) over coming months.

NBN Co Limited has announced 19 locations for the next stage of its rollout on the mainland. It has said that advanced planning is underway in relation to the second release sites, and construction will begin later in 2011. The first and second release sites will test network design and construction methods and will provide information to assist the NBN rollout. The second release sites include 14 new locations as well as extensions to the coverage footprints of the five initial sites.