



Cables Downunder

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**The Secretary
Stephen Palethorpe
Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia.**

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NBN

SUBMISSION TO THE FOURTH HEARING

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION.

Since completing my original submission I have had cause to reflect on a number of issues that I believe the Committee should be made aware of.

In my position as Chairman of Cables Downunder I am often asked to give presentations to other groups and organisations on the issue of burying cables. I am also contacted by other people and organisations as far away as Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria Queensland, Alice Springs and even New Zealand. Yesterday I received a call from a Journalist in Melbourne which caused this reflection.

1. I receive a lot of calls about tree mutilation from around aerial cables. I also get calls about how to go about burying cables in a particular community or street or the erection of new aerial cables. Many of these calls come about as a result of protests and even anger.
2. On one occasion I located a gentleman who had written a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald questioning the methodology of the NBN. It turned out that this gentleman was a desk bound engineer employed by Optus at the time they were erecting their cable, so he was not even on the front line. During the conversation I told him that it was

envisaged that the NBN cable would be erected overhead. His reply was immediate when he said

“during the erection of the Optus cable the demonstrations put me and my colleagues through sheer hell and that for anyone to contemplate erecting another overhead cable was nothing short of Madness”.

3. At a conference of the “Local Government Tree Resources Association” I attended at Sydney Town Hall I was introduced to two representatives of “Active Tree Services” who are one of the main contractors who trim trees from around overhead cables. These two gentlemen informed me that they have a high turnover of staff due to the abuse they get from the public while on the Job. They even told me of one employee who was physically a big man and a footballer. This giant of a man copped so much abuse that he ended up sitting in the gutter sobbing. The following day he resigned.

These real life examples are ones the average person is not necessarily aware of but they are real and give a firsthand insight into the latent anger there is in the community towards overhead cables. They are also an indication of what can be expected once the NBN cable begins being erected on the Mainland. Especially in scenically sensitive areas such as Kiama and Minamurra also Armidale where they have a policy of burying cables when ever there are the resources to do so.

Yours faithfully.

Peter Downey

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Chairman
Cables Downunder.