

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

NBN Co Limited

Question No: 205

NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: Page 76, 25/05/2017

Topic: Monitored alarm subsidy scheme spend

Senator Xenophon, Nick name asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Although my information is that the Australian Standard 4607 is totally and uniquely applicable to monitored alarm systems only. It means that if you are not on a monitored alarm you cannot comply with the standard. In other words, if it is the sort of alarm that CareAlert is offering, by definition, because it is not an ongoing monitored alarm system, it does not comply, even though, by all other measures, it complies.

Senator Fifield: As you pointed out with non-monitored medical alarms, there is the issue of the power supply. Essentially the proposition of those—and there would be other businesses other than the one you mentioned who would provide non-monitored devices—is, in effect, that they would be eligible for a subsidy or the consumers would be eligible for a subsidy to swap out to a mobile device. Now, I have asked my department and NBN to examine what options there may be.

Senator XENOPHON: My understanding is that the monitored alarm subsidy scheme has about \$100 million that has been made available for that. How much is being spent on the monitored alarm subsidy scheme? Can anyone tell me on notice?

Senator Fifield: It is substantial. It is of that order.

Senator XENOPHON: On notice, just to try and get an idea of how much it has cost.

Answer:

As advised in Question on Notice 168 from Supplementary Budget Estimates in October 2016, the program was expected to cost approximately \$100 million at completion. This has since been revised to \$72 million, due to changes in medical alarm industry services in operation. We have spent approximately \$33 million to the end of March 2017.