

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014**

**Communications Portfolio**

**NBN Co Limited**

**Question No: 78**

**Program No. NBN Co Limited**

**Hansard Ref: Page 73 (25/2/2014)**

**Topic: MDUs**

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Maybe not at the table. We were asked to keep their material confidential. My colleagues in Melbourne have approached us about a residents association, which has informed us that NBN has been rolled out in a whole neighbouring area around a particular public housing estate in Carlton. Because of technical issues around MDUs, this estate has been left behind. I can be as specific as you like. They are now quite worried that they will not be connected. Can you give us any comfort? Maybe you addressed this in passing in your opening statement. They have had a philanthropic offer for a wireless system for the whole estate if it can be connected to NBN Co's hardware. It is the Carlton public housing estate across six buildings. I presume you are familiar with the area. It is just immediately north of Melbourne.

**Dr Switkowski:** I am.

**Senator Ludlam:** The estate is listed as build commenced on the maps on your website. I am just wondering whether the rollout is flowing around those estates or whether you can give them some comfort tonight.

**Dr Switkowski:** I guess we will take that one on notice and get more information. I am familiar with the area. It is adjacent to the university and the cemetery. I do not know what the build out is.

**Senator Ludlam:** The boundary is between Lygon Street, Drummond, Elgin and Nicholson streets. So it is that block immediately north of town.

**Dr Switkowski:** We shall follow up.

**Senator Ludlam:** If you could. I guess they are very concerned that the rollout is effectively going to flow around them. What is your policy on public housing as a whole? Is there anything there that might affect them? There is no policy to exclude?

**Mr Brown:** Public housing is included in our footprint.

**Senator Ludlam:** I would have thought so.

**Mr Brown:** There are some process issues which we have tackled in most of the states now, but not all, in terms of getting approval from the actual state governments, who are officially the owners of those premises. There is a lot of approval process steps that they actually have to positively wade us through. That has resulted in some delays in some areas. But most of that is now dealt with.

**Senator Ludlam:** Are you aware of whether this area is—

**Mr Brown:** No. Specifically, I will have to take it on notice. We will get you an answer on the specifics of that.

**Senator Ludlam:** I will just run through what I was going to put on notice, given these gentlemen at the table cannot help me. This is so you have a bit of structure around what I am asking. Is each apartment intended to be connected, or are you going to try one of these units in the basement, which I know your minister is very interested in? Will you be cabling up each apartment? Where can we find some confirmation about the status of when it will eventually be connected? Will private homes around the public housing be connected before the public housing estates? If so, why is that the case? So anything at all you can provide us to give them some confidence would be greatly appreciated.

**Dr Switkowski:** We shall certainly do that.

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**Answer:**

NBN Co can confirm that there is no prioritisation of private homes over public housing. The estate in question is in a Fibre Serving Area Module (FSAM) which is not yet ready for service but is currently under construction for the local and distribution network build.

NBN Co has issued a contract to a Multi Dwelling Unit (MDU) Delivery Partner for this FSAM and scoping activities are underway to confirm addressing, accessibility and other details on all MDUs within the FSAM. Individual site inspections will then commence to be followed closely by cabling work.

The estate will be included in the scope for the MDU Delivery Partner and the intention is that it will receive a fibre to the premises build, where each unit or apartment will be connected with fibre. The actual design will depend on the existing building infrastructure which will be identified during the site inspection.

NBN Co has good engagement with Victoria Housing (Department of Human Services) and it has been briefed on the process for connecting MDUs and Single Dwelling Units (SDUs). To speed up the process it has signed a waiver for Schedule 3 notifications.