

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: 80

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Question on Notice 205 and 207 from Supplementary Estimates

Senator Urquhart asked:

Referring to the answers to Question on Notice 205 and 207 from Supplementary Estimates and the answers provided at the hearing on 25 February 2014;

- a. Can NBN Co provide a copy of every Weekly Program Summary Report prepared since July 2013;
- b. Can NBN Co provide a copy of the Monthly Ready For Service Report each month since the July;
- c. Consistent with the commitment by the Minister to transparency, will any of the following reports which are being provided to RSPs, the Monthly RFS, the Monthly Point of Interconnect Rollout Plan, Proposed Footprint Lists in both XLSX and XML file format and a ZIP archive of MIF files (MapInfo Document) indicating the network boundaries for the Brownfields Fibre, Greenfields Fibre and Fixed Wireless footprints where construction has commenced be provided on NBN Co's website each month?
- d. In answers Dr Switkowski repeatedly referred to providing information to "stakeholders". In the list of stakeholders Dr Switkowski counted suppliers, market analysts, shareholder ministers and RSPs. Does NBN Co regard the Australian Parliament and citizens as stakeholders? Is there any reason why data provided to RSPs should not be provided to all stakeholders?
- e. The Telstra Wholesale website at <http://www.telstrawholesale.com/products/broadband/adsl/adsl-reports-plans/index.htm> provides details of ADSL equipped exchanges, the number of ports available and plans for future capacity upgrades. Telstra provides this to "stakeholders" by publishing on its website. Is there any reason why NBN Co should not be equally transparent?
- f. At the hearing (Page 68) Dr Switkowski said "Many of us come from the private sector where that disclosure is compulsory, so we are hardwired to think along those lines." Why is Telstra publishing on its website data at an exchange level while NBN Co does not publish on its website data at the FSAM (equivalent) level?
- g. Question on Notice 205 asked for specific information in relation to a number of FSAMs.
 - i. Is it NBN Co's contention that the answer given was an accurate response to parts (a), (b) and (c) of that question? If not, is it NBN Co's intention to provide similarly inaccurate answers to future Questions on Notice?
 - ii. Is it NBN Co's contention that answering questions about the costs of detailed design work at the FSAM level is a diversion of resources? If so, is it possible for NBN Co to provide an estimate of the value of design work completed to date for FSAMs listed that have not yet had a build instruction? If not, how was data for the Strategic Review developed?

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- h. The answer to Question on Notice 207 referred the Committee to the answer to the Question on Notice 205. Can NBN Co specifically advise what part of the answer was relevant to that question?
- i. At the hearing (Page 62) in relation to questions on these answers Dr Switkowski said “That may or may not be legitimate. We cannot tell until we take the time to have a look at it.”
 - i. Has Dr Switkowski looked at the answer to determine if it was legitimate?
 - ii. Will NBN Co ensure that in future when asked at a hearing about its answer to a Question on Notice the witnesses at the table are able to answer questions about the answer?

Answer:

- a-f. NBN Co currently places a summary report of rollout information on its website on a weekly basis; however, NBN Co is currently not posting some information to the website until such time as the company has increased confidence in some forecasts. Based on past experience, providing inaccurate information—such as continually slipping RFS dates—is frustrating to all stakeholders (including citizens). As NBN Co’s Executive Chairman Ziggy Switkowski has made clear, “our aim is to stabilise the process and give contractors, suppliers and customers more visibility of forward plans and greater certainty. NBN Co is working with our delivery partners to address planning and construction issues that led to the delays in the past.”
- g. During the Additional Estimates Hearing, Senator Conroy said in relation to QoN 205 that “the information asked for in this question is exactly the same information that was once published in the Monthly Ready for Service (MRFS) report.” QoN 205, however, asked for information such as the date that construction commenced, which is no longer in the MRFS report; to whom the contract was issued, which has never been in the MRFS report; the date the detailed design was completed, which has never been in the MRFS report; and the date the detailed design was expected to be completed, which is also not part of the MRFS report. As outlined in the response to QoN 205, to gather and collate this information from a variety of separate reports for the more than 200 FSAMs listed in the question, would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- h. Please see response to QoN 77