

Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

The committee met on Thursday, 29 May 2014 from 9 am to 10.36 pm.

The committee called the department and agencies of the Communications portfolio, including the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) and NBN Co.

Among other issues, the following issues were discussed:

- the Strategic Review of the National Broadband Network
- investment, equity and revenue matters in relation to NBN Co
- the NBN Co Statement of Expectations and draft corporate plan
- the interim report of the Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
- the Broadband Availability and Quality Report
- the Mobile Black Spot Program
- the functions of TUSMA and the transfer of those functions to the Department of Communications, including savings
- budget and efficiency dividend matters in relation to ACMA
- ACMA's cyber safety programs for schools
- the deregulation of reporting by telecommunications providers
- the performance of Telstra's copper network, including its ongoing maintenance costs and asbestos removal in Telstra facilities
- ACMA's review of the spectrum policy and management framework
- budget and efficiency dividend matters in relation to SBS
- the ABC and SBS efficiency study
- the diversity of language program
- advertising on SBS
- the cost of SBS representation at Eurovision 2014 and the World Cup 2014
- the status of TUSMA contracts relating to the National Relay Service, access to payphones, untimed calls in rural and remote areas, and the Emergency Call Service
- the previous employment of the Chief Executive Officer of NBN Co
- the progress of the NBN rollout and challenges faced, including expectations for a fast and cheap rollout, and technology and regulatory constraints
- the coverage and potential use of proposed NBN Co satellite services
- the NBN Co Fixed Wireless and Satellite Review
- the status of current fibre-to-the-node trials
- equal access for retail service providers
- the renegotiation of the NBN Co/Telstra infrastructure leasing arrangement
- services to remote communities.