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**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON JOB SECURITY**  
**Organisations involved in the delivery of Australia's national  
broadband network.**

**Submission on behalf of Ventia**  
***14 September 2021***

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Select Committee on Job Security  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via Email: [jobsecurity.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:jobsecurity.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Select Committee members,

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to present a submission to this Inquiry.

### **Ventia – a leading infrastructure services provider**

Ventia is an essential infrastructure services provider, working across Australia and New Zealand.

Our service capability spans the full asset lifecycle – from design, minor capital works and operations and maintenance, asset and facilities management, through to asset decommissioning and environmental remediation – complemented by technology-enabled solutions and deep technical expertise.

We have been a major delivery partner on the national broadband network (nbn) since its inception, delivering a significant proportion of the nbn fixed and wireless networks across Australia, as well as providing ongoing network design, build, maintenance and services contracts.

In all aspects of the business, we are committed to making infrastructure work for our communities in a safe and sustainable way.

### **A flexible delivery model – meeting the needs of the network**

Ventia directly employs thousands of salaried and wages personnel across Australia and New Zealand, complemented by an extensive network of subcontractors and suppliers.

The nature of work across the economy is changing and this is the same for the telecommunications sector. As an organisation responsible for building, optimising and maintaining the nbn, Ventia must provide services that are both planned and reactive for network continuity. These services need to be deployed where and when they are required.

To address the above challenge, Ventia has a blended direct workforce and subcontracting model designed to meet our legal and contractual obligations, while also attracting sufficient skills and labour to meet our workforce needs.

While the nature of the work available under our network assurance and services contracts can vary due to demand and network faults, the need for technical support in installation, repair, and maintenance of the nbn provides significant on-demand requirements on our resources.

### **A hybrid workforce model – valued and varied subcontractors**

The workforce strategy developed by Ventia to support the build, maintenance, operation, and upgrade of the nbn is also based on a hybrid workforce model.

The hybrid subcontracting model enables our operations to scale in synchronisation with volume increases and decreases, as service and network operational demand varies. This also enables us to be reactive and reliable across multiple regions and communities at any one time.



### **Engagement of subcontractors**

We engage resources by many means including direct hire employees, temporary labour, consultants, plant hire and subcontracting companies of many sizes from single or sole working directors through to subcontractors with a national footprint and a significant workforce.

Our expression of interest and subcontractor engagement process is open and accessible to any suitably qualified and experienced subcontractors — and all subcontractors are assessed against the same criteria, regardless of size.

We engage subcontractors on fair and reasonable contract terms.

We ensure our subcontractor resource base is paid in accordance with the agreed commercial subcontracts and processes. These are at least in line with the Security of Payment legislative requirements on a state-by-state basis.

Any secondary subcontractors may seek support from Ventia to redress a situation if they are not getting paid by their primary contractor. Ventia pays its contractors regardless of liquidity flow from its own contracts with our head clients, such as NBN Co.

We ensure all technicians and subcontractors working on the nbn are suitably qualified and that there is strict compliance with health, safety, environmental and quality requirements.

We also note that our subcontractors are not solely reliant on Ventia and can work for other companies as they choose.

Our recent subcontractor recruitment drive for work on the nbn Unify contract was promoted nationally via various channels and remained open for approximately six months. We received over 400 applications from interested parties.

### **Supporting local and regional communities**

The hybrid workforce model has also been developed with consideration for sustainability within our downstream supply chain and the communities in which we work. Where possible, we seek to redeploy employees and key specialist subcontractors as our work moves from one region to the next – or onto different contracts within the same region.

Ventia actively seeks to engage local resources, including subcontractors and suppliers, in the places where we work.

We are proud that our workforce model has contributed to the economies of many regional and remote communities across Australia over the past decade.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to participate in this Inquiry and hope our submission and witness testimony will assist in the development of the final report.

Your sincerely

Tim Harwood  
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Ventia