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David Sullivan
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Mr Sullivan,

At Telstra's appearance before the Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN) on 17 April 2015 several Senators displayed an interest in a trial of fibre-to-the-node (FTTN) technology by NBN Co using parts of Telstra's copper network.

This FTTN trial, which took place in Umina Beach on the central coast of New South Wales, will be concluding at the end of May. Given it is reaching its conclusion and has been the subject of some interest by the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to provide some further detail on the trial from Telstra's perspective.

The trial involved connecting homes in the area to nodes built by NBN Co via Telstra's copper network to provide vectored VDSL broadband services. In total, 57 premises were connected to the trial and multiple retailers were involved (one of which was Telstra).

NBN Co engaged Telstra to connect the homes to the nodes over spare pairs using existing copper – that is the voice and ADSL services of the participants that were already in place were not cut over to FTTN, rather where available an existing second copper line into the house was used to run the vectored VDSL service. Telstra charged NBN Co commercial rates for this work, although customers were not charged extra to participate in the trial.

Some of these spare copper paths were pre-existing, for example old fax lines or second phone lines, and some paths needed to be built utilising existing infrastructure as part of the trial. Telstra did not pull new copper as part of this trial, rather existing copper in the network was used to build new pathways to the relevant premises.

We did not remediate the distribution cables, pillars, pits or joints used in the trial. Existing lead-ins were used. For three premises, the existing spare lead-in copper pair was remediated, rearranged or reinstated by Telstra as part of the process of installing the service. Consistent with the trial methodology that existing services remain in place, Telstra installed new sockets for each premises involved in the trial.

As part of the installation for each premises involved in the trial, Telstra performed tests to ensure that the VDSL service was working correctly. This included contacting NBN Co to enable them to complete remote testing of the line prior to installing the new socket, confirming that the line was to the specifications required for a Telstra Wholesale Unconditioned Local Loop (ULL) service, and

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performing a Layer 2 sync from a test modem to the node to ensure there was basic VDSL connectivity.

A couple of months into the trial Telstra, following our standard fault process, did remediate a few lines in the distribution network, but this was well after customers' initial connections. The trial is now scheduled to conclude on 31 May 2015.

Ultimately the trial was undertaken by NBN Co, but from Telstra's perspective it has provided useful information about how FTTN vectored VDSL services operate over copper lines to consumers' homes over a period of many months. It has provided data points on several parameters including actual in-home speeds realised over different copper lengths. For example, Telstra Retail trial participants ranged from approximately 142 metres up to 1,115 metres from the node.

The trial was a non-commercial actual service for a small number of people over spare pairs using existing copper. It could not be a full commercial service as at the time it was set up the Definitive Agreements had not been renegotiated, so NBN Co did not have rights to offer commercial services over Telstra's copper network.

I hope the Committee finds this information useful.

Yours sincerely,

James Shaw
Director
Government Relations
James.Shaw@team.telstra.com