Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network

Answers to Questions on Notice

Committee Hearing 15 August 2018

NBN Co Limited

Question No: 6

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Topic: Wireless users

Mr Stephen Jones, MP asked:

Mr STEPHEN JONES: Do you have any data which enables us to understand the proposition that you have just put to us? On 6 June, I asked you to provide some data. You said you would and you haven't. In fact, you've just given an answer that doesn't correlate to the question that was asked. So I'll put it again, and leave the gamers issue out. Do you have data which enables us to validate that proposition?
Mr Rue: Sorry, I simply wanted to put on the record that Mr Morrow was not blaming gamers for congestion, that's simply what I was trying to say.
Mr STEPHEN JONES: And I appreciate that.
Mr Rue: Let me ask some colleagues who are listening in and see if we've got something for you, Mr Jones. I don't have anything here, I'm sorry. Unless you have, Mr Ryan?
Mr Ryan: No.
Mr Rue: Yes. So let us press the button and see what comes back. If not, we'll take that on notice again.

Answer:

nbn has a fixed amount of capacity on each cell and this has to be distributed amongst users on that cell at any point in time. Performance is therefore a function of the number of simultaneous users and the amount of bandwidth and data being consumed. If a user on a high speed plan (say 50 mbps) is consuming a constant high bandwidth stream of data, there is less capacity available for other users operating at the same time The nbn fixed wireless network is designed to distribute the capacity appropriately, but there will be an appreciable impact on a cell from a heavy user that is continuously using the available cell capacity. By definition, therefore, the higher proportion of heavy users on a cell, the greater the impact on customer experience on those cells.

The original design of the fixed wireless network envisaged a 512 kbps committed information rate. This was deemed appropriate in a pre-video streaming world, because of the bursting nature of user browsing or discrete downloads (for example of an image or document). The statistical models that were employed in network design predicted a good experience for a large number of people on a cell, simply because it was unlikely that a high number of users would be bursting at exactly the same time. Sustained applications such as video streaming changed the models and nbn has responded by doubling capacity on the network.