

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 1**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN demand in regional Australia

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page xx

**Dr Helen Haines, MP asked:**

Are you able to comment on the level of demand in regional Australia? Have you got some comparisons between regions and metro?

**Answer:**

NBN Co advises that it does not currently separate Date Demand on a Regional/Metro basis and reports an aggregated level, which can be found on the transparency dashboard

(<https://www.nbnco.com.au/corporate-information/about-nbn-co/updates/dashboard-may-2020>)

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 2**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Regional city data

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 5

**Ms Susan Templeman, MP asked:**

Chair, can I just ask that we get a firm commitment to get that regional city data. I think, Mr Kathage, you mentioned it. There were a couple of questions that mentioned it. Would it be possible?

**Answer:**

See the response to Question on Notice 1.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 3**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** 183,000 fibre-to-the-node users not achieving minimum speeds of 25 Mbps

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 5

**Ms Susan Templeman, MP asked:**

I want to drill down into fibre to the node. A bit over a year ago in April 2019, NBN Co revealed that 183,000 fibre-to-the-node users couldn't achieve minimum speeds of 25 megabits per second. Some of those were due to co-existence. Some were degraded copper lines or long loop lengths. Sometimes there was internal cabling causing interference. I just want to know: what information and updates have the department sought and received on this problem?

I guess the bit I'm interested in is what new information and updates you've received on the progress of that.

...each of those issues: the degraded copper, the long loops and the co-existence.

**Answer:**

NBN Co updates the Department on various aspects of the company's performance, both regularly and in relation to specific requests.

The company regularly updates the Department on premises that are unable to achieve 25 megabits per second (Mbps) through the Monthly Shareholder Report. This encompasses the impact of the various issues outlined above. See the answer to Question on Notice 4 for the most recent figures.

The impact on speeds of long loops has mostly been addressed through the deployment of fibre to the curb technology.

NBN Co is also providing quarterly updates to the Department on the end of co-existence. For current details – see the answer to Question on Notice 5.

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**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 4**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** FTTN lines currently unable to achieve a layer 2 speed of 25 Mbps

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 5

**Ms Suan Templeman, MP asked:**

How many fibre-to-the-node lines are currently unable to achieve a layer 2 speed of 25 megabits per second?

**Answer:**

There were 139,963 premises receiving less than 25 megabits per second on the network as at May 2020. This reduction from the figures NBN Co provided in April 2019 mainly reflects the company's progress on ending co-existence, but also the impact of ongoing network optimisation work.

As noted in the Question on Notice response of April 2019, where the network is not capable of providing the minimum wholesale download speeds after co-existence has ended, NBN Co will take action to rectify any issues in its network so that the requirements of the Statement of Expectations are met.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Question No: 5**

**Division:** Productivity and Technology

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Numbers where co-existence has ended

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 6

**Ms Susan Templeman MP asked:**

‘Do you have that number, where coexistence has ended? Have you got a breakdown of the numbers of each of those?’

**Answer:**

NBN Co Limited has indicated that, as at 1 July 2020, co-existence has ended on 5,750 nodes out of a total of 27,933 nodes in the Fibre to the Node footprint.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 6**

**Division:** Productivity and Technology

**Hearing Name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN FTTN 25 Megabits per second

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 7

**Ms Susan Templeman MP asked:**

‘How long will it take, from what you know, for all fibre-to-the-node users to have a minimum speed of 25 megabits per second?’

**Answer:**

The vast majority of Fibre to the Node (FTTN) lines are expected to achieve a peak speed of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) by December 2020. Given the role of other parties in addressing remaining issues a small proportion of premises may take longer.

NBN Co is carrying out programs to progressively address issues which can prevent FTTN premises from obtaining the minimum speed of 25 Mbps. While long copper lines are being addressed by NBN Co using Fibre to the Curb in-fill, speed limitations caused by internal cabling problems require cooperation between NBN Co, retail service providers and consumers to resolve. While NBN Co has a program to identify and assist industry to address internal cabling problems, resolving these issues necessarily requires the end-users involvement in facilitating completion of in-premises activities.

Addressing speed limitations caused by co-existence similarly requires involvement of other parties. These can arise in areas where there are non-standard services which require more time to migrate. These include non-premises (e.g. traffic lights), some special (business) services and multi-dwelling unit common areas. NBN Co is working with industry to enable migration of these services off the copper network in order to end co-existence.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 7**

**Division:** Productivity and Technology

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Low income households announcement

**Question Type:** Hansard Ref: Page 7

**Brian Mitchell, MP asked:**

Is the data being centrally collected based on the feedback from respective states to scope the number of families who are identified as having no internet at home?

Are you able to get that data on notice for the committee?

**Answer:**

As Mr Richard Windeyer indicated at the hearing, the Department does not centrally collect data on the number of families who are identified as having no internet at home as part of the NBN Co's COVID-19 relief and assistance package announced on 17 April 2020.

NBN Co has advised that it does not receive detailed data from states and territories identifying the numbers of families that have no internet at home. NBN Co contacted education authorities asking them to distribute information to schools about the availability of offers from participating retail service providers (RSPs). Schools were then asked to make the information available to families who may be eligible. Additionally, some RSPs also undertook their own marketing and engagement.

Note that each state and territory responded to the COVID-19 situation differently in terms of the mix between online and offline learning. In order to support their preferred approach, most state and territory education authorities offered equipment to students who did not have access to the internet and/or a computer. Examples included:

- Victoria aimed to loan more than 21,000 dongles to students who did not have access to digital technologies
- Queensland encouraged schools to loan devices like laptops or tablets to students
- New South Wales set up a temporary loans process for schools to access the equipment they needed and provided more than 8,440 internet dongles.
- Australian Capital Territory provided devices, along with internet access, for families who do not otherwise have access/equipment at home.

It is also important to note that on-site learning was an option in all states and territories for children of essential workers or families where online learning was not a practical option.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 8**

**Division:** Productivity and Technology

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Data on low income rebate

**Question Type:** Hansard Ref: Page 8

**Brian Mitchell, MP asked:**

Do you not collect the data about how many low-income families are receiving the rebate?

Or is the information available and you just don't have it to hand?

I mean, is the data collected? Are you able to get your hands on it?

**Answer:**

As Mr Richard Windeyer indicated at the hearing, the Department does not collect data on the number of Australian consumers taking advantage of the \$150 million COVID-19 relief funding, which includes the education package, however this data is collected by NBN Co.

NBN Co has advised that the education package is to be paid by means of a rebate to retail service providers who make claims for passing on the discount to eligible families. These claims are made at the end of the monthly billing cycle. To date only a small number of claims have been received, however NBN Co expects to see more claims after the rebate ends on 30 September.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 9**

**Division:** NBN

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN fixed wireless tower numbers

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 9

**Senator Farrell asked:**

In a question on notice in November 2019, the NBN advised that roughly 2,200 towers were operational and ready to connect. Are you able to tell us how many towers have been built since then?

**Answer:**

NBN Co advises that as at 30 June 2020, there were 2,317 fixed wireless sites ready for service.

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**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 10**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing Name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN fixed-wireless sites switched to satellite

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 9

**Senator Farrell asked:**

Based on the rough figure of 275 households per tower, this would suggest that up to 75 towers would have been needed to serve the 20,000 premises that were switched to satellite and roughly 150 towers would have been needed to serve the 40,000 premises that were switched off fixed wireless. Is it your understanding that sites could not be secured for the 150 fixed-wireless towers?

**Answer:**

NBN Co made changes to access technologies in a number of areas around Australia because the company was unable to proceed with some planned fixed wireless sites (120 sites in total), and to improve the user experience in a number of existing fixed wireless served areas by expanding the fixed line footprint (26 sites in total). The changes mean that around 22,000 premises that were planned to be served by fixed wireless or were served by fixed wireless or satellite will instead be served by fixed line, while around 20,000 premises that were planned to be served by fixed wireless will instead be served by satellite.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 11**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN fixed wireless to satellite locations

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 9

**Senator Farrell asked:**

**SENATOR FARRELL:** Can the department undertake to provide, on notice, the location for each fixed-wireless site that was switched to satellite?

**RICHARD WINDEYER:** We can certainly see if we can get that information from the company and provide it on notice, yes.

**Answer:**

As at 31 July 2020, the location of these sites include Beechmont, Beechmont North, Blackheath, Blue Mountain, Bonogin South, Boyland, Brigadoon, Broken Head, Bulahdelah East, Byers, Clagiraba, Clyde North, Cornelia, Crabbes Creek, Daylesford, Duralong, Dulong, Dural East, Fairney View West, Federal, Ferguson, Fingal, Forrestdale, Gilston, Glenorie, Glenorie West, Grose Vale, Gwinganna South, Hellfire Pass, Humbug Scrub, Humpty Doo South, Kangaloon, Karnup South, Kenthurst West, Keppel Sands, Kilmore East, Kingsholme, Kooralbyn, Kulangoor, Lakesland, Lamington North, Lillian Rock, Maroota, Moolap, Moss Vale, Mount Samson West, Mount Walker, Mulgoa North, Mylor, Neranwood South, Nerong, Nethercote, Onkaparinga Hills, Ourimbah West, Pheasants Nest, Piggabeen, Pomborneit, Reesville, Robertson South, Smithfield South, Smiths Gully East, Springbrook North, Springbrook South, Stoneville, Surveyors Bay, Talbingo, Tamborine South, Theresa Park West, Tomewin, Toolern Vale, Torquay East, Uki North, Upper Brookfield, Verrierdale, Verrierdale East, Wedderburn, Wellard, Wendoree Park, Wisemans Ferry, Witta, Wolvi, Woorabinda and Wooragee.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 12**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Monopoly in any regional, rural and remote areas

**Question Type:** Written, 27/06/2020

**Senator Stirling Griff asked:**

Does the Department believe that NBN Co currently has a monopoly in any regional, rural, or remote areas? Is this likely to change in the future?

**Answer:**

The Government is committed to free and open competition in the telecommunications market. NBN Co does not have a statutory monopoly in any region in Australia. The legislative framework through which NBN Co operates requires NBN Co to sell wholesale access to its network to retail service providers and its activities are overseen by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

NBN Co was established to provide broadband services across Australia, even where doing so is not commercially viable. However, other providers can deliver wholesale broadband networks and compete with NBN Co. The Government supports infrastructure-based competition.

Constructing networks is expensive and it is a commercial matter for private companies as to where they choose to provide services. The Government believes the best outcomes for consumers comes from an open, competitive market, and the regulatory framework in place supports that competition. The Government also believes it is important that people in rural and remote areas can access telecommunications services while the market continues to develop.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 13**

**Division:** Telecommunications Market Policy

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small business

**Topic:** Monitoring of NBN's activities to ensure that consumers are given appropriate quality of service in monopoly areas

**Question Type:** Written, 27/06/2020

**Senator Stirling Griff asked:**

For any areas where NBN Co has a monopoly, does the Department or any other agency monitor NBN's activities to ensure that consumers are given appropriate quality of service? Would this monitoring continue if NBN Co became privately owned?

**Answer:**

NBN Co does not have a statutory monopoly in any part of Australia.

Since 1 July 2020, under Part 19 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*, NBN Co has been the Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) for areas where it has rolled out its network. It will be the default SIP for all of Australia once the National Broadband Network is declared built and fully operational. This means it must connect premises to its networks on reasonable request from a retail provider, and supply wholesale services that allow those retail providers to supply consumers with peak download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and upload speeds of 5 Mbps.

Other carriers must also be SIPs under these new laws. From 1 July 2020, where a carrier enters into a contract to service a real estate development project or a building redevelopment project, it must nominate the development as a SIP service area and be the SIP for that service area. Like NBN Co, that carrier would then have to connect premises to its networks and supply wholesale services that support the broadband speeds specified above.

There are also mechanisms in the law for existing networks in real estate development projects, operated by carriers other than NBN Co, to become SIP areas (and the carriers to then be the SIPs for their respective projects).

The Minister has the ability to impose standards, rules and benchmarks for SIPs.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is responsible for monitoring compliance with the SIP obligations. Irrespective of any future privatisation, NBN Co has to comply with all applicable legal requirements, including SIP.

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**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 14**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN Co moving customers from one technology to another

**Question Type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:**

Has the Department suggested or directed NBN Co to move customers or areas from one technology to another? If so, could the Department table information on the locations, timing, and technology for each request.

**Answer:**

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) is building and operating the network on a commercial basis in line with the Government's Statement of Expectations. NBN Co has the flexibility and discretion to deploy whichever technology the company deems most cost-effective. Technology selection and network design are operational matters for the company. The department has neither suggested nor directed NBN Co to move customers or areas from one technology to another.

NBN Co does regularly update the department on the rollout including details of technology deployed. This includes providing specific information on NBN Co's deployment decisions for particular locations as needed in order to assist with responses to briefing requests and correspondence.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

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**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 15**

**Division:** NBN

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Future investment plans to move customers from satellite connections to fixed line or wireless services

**Question Type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:**

Is the Department aware of whether NBN Co has future investment plans to move customers from satellite connections to fixed line or wireless services? Could information about these plans, including areas and schedules, be provided.

**Answer:**

The Department is not aware of any future investment plans by NBN Co to move customers from satellite connections to fixed line or fixed wireless services beyond the initial network build.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 16**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small business

**Topic:** Next valuation of NBN Co on a discounted cash flow basis

**Question Type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Stirling Griff asked:**

- 1) Is the Department producing its next valuation of NBN Co on a discounted cash flow basis?
- 2) If not, what is the rationale for using a different method and what changes would lead the Department to adopt a DCF basis?
- 3) Has the Department produced any valuation estimates on a DCF basis and has the Minister issued any directions about the use of a particular valuation methods?

**Answers:**

- 1) The department is working with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) to settle completion of its 2019-20 financial year statements and work is underway to consider the valuation methodology to be applied to the administered investment in NBN Co. No decision has been made, and the final approach is subject to review by the department's audit committee and agreement by the Secretary of the department. The financial statements will be published in the department's annual report.
- 2) The department's approach to valuation of NBN Co as an administered investment, and how it measures its fair value, is outlined within the Department of Communications and the Arts' Annual Report 2019 on pages 149-150. This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Accounting Standards (specifically AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*) which is subject to review through the ANAO.
- 3) See answer to question 1. The Minister has not issued any directions about the use of a particular valuation methodology.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 17**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Modelling for the Regional Broadband Scheme

**Question Type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:**

How long did it take the Department to produce the modelling for the Regional Broadband Scheme? How long would it take the Department to update the modelling? Please provide a breakdown of the timing and account for any differences.

**Answer:**

As noted in the Bureau of Communications and the Arts' NBN non-commercial services funding options final report, the project commenced in December 2014 and included a two-stage consultation process between May 2015 and October 2015 that informed the modelling approach. The final report was completed in March 2016 and published in December 2016. The length of time it would take to update the modelling would depend on a range of factors, including data availability and period of consultation undertaken. The Department is not intending to update the model as the ACCC is required to update the model within 150 days of the *Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer) Act 2020* coming into effect (which occurred on 26 May 2020). Additionally, under the *Telecommunications (Regional Broadband Scheme) Charge Act 2020*, the ACCC is required to review the RBS charge amount at least once in every five year period.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 18**

**Division:** NBN

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN Co revised Statement of Expectations

**Question type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:**

How much input will NBN Co have into the revised Statement of Expectations? When is this likely to be published?

**Answer:**

A Statement of Expectations is developed by the Government to provide guidance on the purpose, role and limits on the activities of a Government Business Enterprise. The Resource Management Guide on Government Business Enterprises (GBE) (RMG 126), issued by the Department of Finance, notes that Statements of Expectation will be developed by Shareholder Ministers in consultation with the GBE's Board (section 1.11). NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) will accordingly be consulted on the Statement of Expectations, but its final form will be determined by the Government.

The Government has not yet announced when an updated Statement of Expectations for NBN Co will be published.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 19**

**Division:** Spectrum and Telecommunications Deployment Policy

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Progress on converting apparatus licences to spectrum licences

**Question type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:** NBN Co has previously told his Committee it holds apparatus licences which need to be converted to spectrum licences in order to make 5G spectrum in metro areas available for other operators. What progress has been achieved since February?

**Answer:**

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has been working with NBN Co and Optus to restack and consolidate some of NBN Co's apparatus licence holdings into the 3400-3475 MHz frequency range.

ACMA is also working with other incumbent apparatus licensees to restack them from the areas and frequencies proposed for conversion to spectrum licensing. Alternative spectrum options have been identified for these services to move within the 3.4 GHz band.

The restack process is currently on track to be finalised on or before 30 November 2020.

The restack of NBN Co and Optus services as well as other incumbent apparatus licences is a necessary initial step to enable NBN Co (and Optus) to consolidate their spectrum holdings in the band. Once restack is completed, and subject to a decision by the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts to designate spectrum in the 3.4 GHz band in specified areas for spectrum licensing, ACMA will be able to commence the process to convert NBN Co's apparatus licences to spectrum licences.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

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**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 20**

**Division:** Spectrum and Telecommunications Deployment Policy

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** NBN Spectrum – price and ownership

**Question type:** Written, 26/06/2020

**Senator Griff asked:** Has a price been set for the spectrum and, if so, could you table information about what spectrum is owned by NBN Co, what is being used, what is being excised, and the value of each?

**Answer:**

A price has not yet been set for the spectrum that NBN Co would hold in the 3.4 GHz band if its apparatus licences are converted into spectrum licences.

NBN Co currently holds 10 public telecommunications services (PTS) apparatus licences for public mobile telecommunications services (PMTS) Class B services in 3400-3425 MHz and 3492.5-3542.5 MHz. NBN Co uses its apparatus licences to deliver its fixed-wireless services in outer-metropolitan areas of Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth and regional areas.

ACMA has indicated in its Draft Five Year Spectrum Outlook that 75 MHz of spectrum may be made available in urban areas excised from NBN Co's converted licences; however, this is pending the development of interference management criteria and an assessment of the appropriate licensing type to use. The areas covered by NBN Co's licences, and those that may be excised, are available in Appendices B and C to the ACMA paper, *Optimising Arrangements in the 3400 – 3575 MHz band: Planning Decisions and Preliminary Views* (available at: [https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/IFC-12-2019-Optimising-arrangements-3400-3575-MHz-band\\_Planning-decisions-and-preliminary-views.docx](https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/IFC-12-2019-Optimising-arrangements-3400-3575-MHz-band_Planning-decisions-and-preliminary-views.docx)).

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 21**

**Referred from Department of Finance Question No: 3**

**Division: NBN**

**Hearing Name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** RBS - Optimal services in rural and regional areas

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 24

**Senator Davey asked:**

**Senator DAVEY:** Thank you. I'll just move on quickly to the Regional Broadband Scheme, which has now been put in place. Will that scheme, as it's currently established, be sufficient to enable the NBN to provide optimal services in rural and regional areas? I note that that scheme was put in place because it is recognised that the provision of broadband services in rural, regional and remote areas, if it were a full cost-recovery model, would not be commercially viable, so the Regional Broadband Scheme was brought in to flatten, I suppose, and to cross-subsidise rural, regional and remote services. Is that scheme sufficient to provide the ongoing security that rural, regional and remote customers want for their services?

**Mr Jaggers:** That's quite a detailed question. I don't have the answer to that myself, but I'll just check with my team to see if any of us can help with that; otherwise, I might need to take it on notice. I might just check with Mr Atkin first.

**Mr Atkin:** The Department of Infrastructure is primarily responsible for that piece of work.

**Mr Jaggers:** We might need to consult with them and come back. We can certainly take it on notice and consult with our partner agency. I might just check if Ms Hall has anything before we formally do that.

**Ms Hall:** No, I'm sorry. I don't have anything further on that. I think that the Department of Infrastructure and Communications are probably going to be of most assistance. But we can take that on notice and come back to you to get an answer to that.

**Senator DAVEY:** Okay. That's all from me, thanks.

**Answer:**

The Regional Broadband Scheme provides certainty that broadband services will be available to regional Australians now and in the future. The Scheme will provide sustainable and transparent funding that will enable NBN Co to fund its loss making fixed wireless and satellite services. The Scheme will enable NBN Co to provide services to these premises in line with its Statement of Expectations.

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Committee Hearing 26 June 2020**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Question No: 22**

**Division:** Telecommunications Market Policy

**Hearing name:** Inquiry into the business case for the NBN and the experiences of small businesses

**Topic:** Choice of technology during migration period

**Question type:** Hansard Ref: Page 4

**Mr Windeyer:** (*Proof Committee Hansard*, 26 June 2020, p. 4)

...One of the reasons for that, of course, is that we currently have in place a requirement that those areas continue to have a choice of technology. As you would know, in the fixed-line footprint there is a period where you've got the opportunity to connect to the NBN before the old Telstra network is switched off. There's a required migration either onto the NBN or onto a completely different network, whereas in the fixed-wireless and satellite areas there continues to be the ability to stay on the Telstra network and continue to get ADSL services if you wish...

**Question:** Please provide a copy of, or weblink for, the **requirement** that those areas continue to have a choice of technology...

**Answer:** Under the Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation Performance Agreement (TUSOPA) Telstra is required to maintain its copper network to supply voice services to customers within NBN Co Limited's fixed wireless and satellite footprints. Telstra provides ADSL services on this copper network on a commercial basis.

Information on the copper continuity obligation can be found in the media release of 23 June 2011 at <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%22media/pressrel/868139%22> and on page 19 of Telstra's disclosure at <https://www.asx.com.au/asxpdf/20110623/pdf/41zclc1lvjs25r.pdf> to the Australian Stock Exchange.