

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

NBN Co Limited

Question No: 284

Program No. NBN Co Limited

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Statement of Expectations

Senator Urquhart asked:

Referring to the most recent Statement of Expectations provided by Shareholder Ministers to NBN Co:

- a. The SOE states that NBN Co will prioritise areas identified as “poorly served” by the Broadband Availability and Quality Report to the extent “commercially and operationally feasible”.
Has the company attempted to define what “commercially and operationally” feasible means? For example, what extra cost for prioritisation would be the limit at which you would decide an area should not be prioritised?
- b. The phrase “poorly served” does not appear in in the Broadband Availability and Quality Report. What does NBN Co understand the term “poorly served” to mean in the context of the SOE?
- c. The mybroadband website is being refined based on feedback from actual end users. Given that this information is dynamic—or supposed to be dynamic—how will dynamic information be incorporated design rules?

Answer:

- a. Each area is analysed based on the technology available, delivery capability, and construction costs required to service that area. It is expected that after an iterative process of analysis and validation, a proposed set of feasibility rules can be determined.
- b. The term “poorly served” in the context of the Statement of Expectations (SoE) is understood to mean under-served. Department of Communications’ analysis found that there are approximately 1.6 million premises in areas which can be categorised as not having access to adequate Broadband services – NBN Co may designate these areas as underserved. The premises in this category are mostly located in regional or remote areas of Australia, or in small pockets of poor service in metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas.
- c. The intent of the feedback is to gather information for further analysis on broadband availability and quality. Significant trending information collected would be used to inform revisions to design rules.