

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015
Communications Portfolio
nbn

Question No: 120

nbn

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: NBN Service – Tasmania’s West Coast

Senator McKim, Nick asked:

NBN Service on Tasmania’s West Coast

1. Can you confirm that towns on the West Coast of Tasmania will be receiving a satellite service rather than fibre or fixed wireless?
2. Under the previous government the West Coast was scheduled for fibre rollout, why has the position on rolling out fibre changed?
3. Given NBN Co’s own admission that “NBN satellite broadband may be prone to rain fade and service disruption in heavy rain conditions”, why has the decision been made to install a satellite service in an area with some of the highest rainfall in Australia.
4. Will NBN Co review this decision?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Previous plans for a fixed line rollout to the West Coast were indicative only. The necessary fibre infrastructure on the West Coast does not currently exist. Telstra ADSL services are currently supplied by microwave backhaul to the West Coast. Whilst Tasnetworks do have some fibre between Railton and Roseberry, it does not include a ‘redundant loop’. Without this, the service would be at risk of disruption because the connectivity is essentially one-way. The risk of service outage is contrary to the very strict service availability requirements under nbn’s Wholesale Broadband Agreement (WBA) with our customers – the Retail Service Providers. To adhere to these requirements would involve nbn spending tens of millions of dollars to construct a fibre path. This is not a commercial decision nbn is prepared to make given the population of these areas. This solution would also take many years to complete and given its mandate from Government to rollout broadband to poorly serviced communities as quickly as possible, the best solution is to extend the Long Term Satellite Service to these areas.
3. It is expected that the satellite service provided to the West Coast of Tasmania will operate within expected reliability parameters.
4. Not under the current policy parameters set by the Government to roll out the nbn .