

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: 83

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Topic: Copper Network – Annual Maintenance Costs

Senator Ludlam, Scott asked:

Senator LUDLAM: Yes, that seems reasonable to me. What are your estimated maintenance costs of the copper—not remediation in terms of cleaning it up as you go, but your annual maintenance cost of the copper network?

Mr Rue: Obviously that will become more apparent as the rollout goes forward. We made some estimates in the corporate plan, the details of which are still subject to negotiations we would be having on those operating and maintenance contracts.

Senator LUDLAM: How is that possible? How is it possible that you still cannot tell us a Senate committee in late 2015—two years after you got started—how much it is going to cost annually? You cannot even tell us what your estimates were—or am I misunderstanding?

Mr Rue: Because we are currently working through contracts to do that.

Senator LUDLAM: So you cannot even tell me to within an order of magnitude what your annual maintenance bill is going to be for the network once you have cleaned it up?

Mr Rue: To do that will compromise current negotiations.

Senator LUDLAM: That is remarkable. Not even to within an order of magnitude?

Mr Rue: I would hate to compromise discussions, Senator—sorry.

Senator LUDLAM: When do you think that information might be able to be put into the public domain? I, and others, have been asking for that particular piece of information for more than two years.

Mr Rue: Let me take that on notice, Senator. I will come back to you.

Answer:

The operations and maintenance costs of the copper are subject to negotiation, and are currently Commercial in Confidence.