

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Questions on Notice

Inquiry into the National Broadband Network

Sydney, 3 March 2009

Telstra

QoN No.	Question	Answer
1	<p>Senator LUNDY—Thank you for that explanation. Is the subexchange at the MLC building a remote integrated multiplexer?</p> <p>Mr Quilty—I am not aware of that. I will have to take that on notice. There is nothing here in my advice that indicates that it is.</p>	The sub-exchange in the MLC building will not house a Remote Integrated Multiplexer.
2	<p>Senator LUNDY—Sorry, Mr Quilty. I do not think anyone is suggesting you did not provide adequate notice; I am just asking you if you gave them the background to the issue—that is, a building was being demolished and that led to the change.</p> <p>Mr Quilty—My advice here does not indicate either way, so I would have to take that on notice. It does not say we did; it does not say we did not.</p>	Telstra’s letters to its wholesale customers advised customers of a Network Upgrade (or network modernisation) in the Deakin Exchange Service Area (“ESA”) associated with the relocation of the Alexander Sub-Exchange. It did not mention the lease expiry or demolition of the Alexander Building. (Note that we have since advised the Senate Committee that the Alexander Building is not being demolished.)
3	<p>Senator LUNDY—Let me put it back to you, somewhat cheekily, that it does not take much to tell the whole story the first time around.</p> <p>Mr Quilty—My advice in what I have written here is that people were given the requisite notice. We did advise our customers in accordance with the terms, but my advice here does not say either way whether that included the explanation of the circumstances, so I need to check. I just do not know.</p>	Telstra wrote to all affected wholesale customers on 13 February 2009 advising customers of a Network Upgrade (or network modernisation) consistent with the terms of its agreements, and providing the affected customers with 15 weeks notice of the Network Upgrade. In doing so we complied with our customers’ terms.

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4	<p>Senator LUNDY—I suspect not. Can you confirm that some years ago Telstra gave undertakings in the context of, I think, the Besley inquiry that no more large pair gain systems that had a broadband-blocking capability or effect, either in whole or in part, were being installed in the network? Is that still the case?</p> <p>Mr Quilty—I would have to check that. I do not know the answer to that. I do recall that there was agreement reached on the rehabilitation of large pair gain systems, and I know a program was put in place in that regard, but in terms of any such commitment as you are referring to I would have to take that on notice.</p>	<p>In response to the findings of the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry, Telstra provided a number of Undertakings to the Government detailing Telstra's strategy to improve phone and internet services affected by the use of pair gain systems. The undertakings included measures to upgrade certain types of pair gains systems and to improve the delivery of dial up internet services over pair gain systems, but did not include an undertaking to stop installing pair gain systems in the network.</p>
5	<p>Senator LUNDY—I do recall that. Can I ask you, then, if Telstra is still installing RIMs, or remote integrated multiplexers, for the purposes of rolling out new infrastructure?</p> <p>Mr Quilty—I would have to take that one on notice as well. I do not know the absolute answer. Certainly it is not a large part of our capital works program at all, but as to whether there are any at all being installed I cannot be definitive.</p>	<p>Telstra ceased purchase and general deployment of RIMs in 2002. There has been a small number of installations over the last three years for specific technical reasons. The locations of these RIMs were provided in Telstra's response to questions on notice from its previous testimony.</p>
6	<p>Senator LUNDY—With respect to existing RIMS, are you aware of any work being done to improve their capacity to host DSLAMs or ADSL ports?</p> <p>Mr Quilty—I might have to take that on notice as well.</p>	<p>Telstra augments the ADSL capacity of RIM cabinets in response to customer demand and where economic, up to the technical and physical limits of the RIM cabinet. Augmentation beyond that point generally requires the high cost installation of an additional cabinet and is a commercial decision based on a range of factors.</p>

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7	<p>Senator LUNDY—While you are there, could you also take on notice the extent to which any competitors are able to locate their DSLAMs within the remote integrated multiplexers of Telstra and if, in fact, that has ever occurred. Thank you.</p>	<p>Technically it is not feasible for competitors to install a DSLAM in remote integrated multiplexer housings. ULLS access seekers can connect their DSLAMs at RIMs by the use of an external interconnect cable. Telstra has had occasional enquiries to do so, however these have not led to interconnection.</p>
8	<p>Dr Warren—I will just add one extra thing on an earlier question. I thought I had seen this, and I apologise for not having it more closely to hand. In our answers to your questions on notice last time, it says: ‘Telstra seeded its purchase and general deployment of RIMS in 2002. There have been a small number of installations over the last three years for specific technical reasons.’ Then we go on to list the areas concerned. I think it is fair to say that as a general matter we do not. I am pretty certain that with the Alexander building example the MLC building is not a RIM. We will double-check that for you, but my sense is that RIMs are no longer—for obvious reasons given that they are a broadband blocker—a key factor in our rollout schedule. Let us double-check the specific questions you asked there, but I think that might help answer that initial question.</p> <p>Senator LUNDY—I certainly appreciate that, Dr Warren, and I would be interested in any information you have about remediation of RIMs and their broadband-blocking characteristics.</p>	<p>As per question 6, Telstra augments the ADSL capacity of RIM cabinets in response to customer demand and where economic, up to the technical and physical limits of the RIM cabinet. Augmentation beyond that point generally requires the high cost installation of an additional cabinet and is a commercial decision based on a range of factors.</p>