

**From:** Stephen Gow **Sent:** Wednesday, 21 April 2010 10:13 AM  
**To:** Committee, Broadband (SEN)  
**Cc: Subject:** RE: Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband - Questions on Notice  
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr Palethorpe

**Hansard**

We have reviewed the record and do not wish to propose any changes.

As to the **Questions on Notice:**

- a. How did your Council first hear it had been selected as a mainland trial site? [To our knowledge, our Mayor was contacted on the day of the announcement in March.](#)
- b. Is new fibre being installed or is existing infrastructure being used? Was there existing infrastructure available? Is the roll-out via aerial or underground cabling?

[Based on the presentation by NBN for this Council held here on 1st April 2010, we understand that NBN will roll out new fibre in the early release site but negotiations are currently underway with utility companies such as Country Energy on the possibility for NBN to use CE's existing fibre infrastructure. The extent of the CE fibre is limited. The CE fibre in Armidale was deployed as part of the UNE's Transgrid / Country Energy / AARNET solution and as part of the NSW Government's National Communications Fund 27 \(NCF27 Project\) which was funded by the Commonwealth Government. The NSW Government \(NCF27\) project was designed to connect public primary and high schools, TAFE and Armidale Public Hospital to broadband.](#)

[According to NBN Co, the rollout may include aerial and underground cabling but this is not yet certain.](#)

- c. Is current regional backhaul sufficient to meet the network's needs?

[This is a difficult question for us to answer. We are advised that while it can be assumed that there may be sufficient regional backhaul however, the cost of accessing this backhaul may be cost prohibitive to most commercial users.](#)

- d. To what extent is information about the NBN being communicated to residents / local businesses?

[NBN have informed Council that they intend to hold an information session for our community on Saturday, 15 May 2010. Residents in the early release area will invited by mail to drop in to the Armidale Town Hall where there will be representatives of NBN available to answer any question. NBN will also have a static information display at the Town Hall. Council has requested that the display be set up in the reception area of Council's Civic Administration Building \(CAB\) after the 15 May 2010. Council has also offered NBN the opportunity to set up a display at the Armidale Library. NBN Co have advised that they intend to conduct more than one community information session.](#)

- e. What do you see as the benefit of the network to your local government area and its residents? What additional services / opportunities do you hope the NBN will deliver in your area? What additional support do you require to realise those plans?

[The primary benefit we see is that the NBN will encourage the greater availability of "competitively priced" broadband services by new and existing retail providers. Secondly, the availability of the NBN will attract new retail providers to offer services in Armidale. Thirdly, the NBN will encourage innovation and the use of high bandwidth applications in both community and business use. Armidale suffers from a lack of high end broadband capability - eg. ADSL2+ and it is hoped that the NBN will encourage the availability of faster broadband services than ADSL2+.](#)

- f. Is there demand in your area among constituents for the NBN services? If so, for what services?

[Yes, however this could be described as pent-up demand. Armidale has a very high proportion of people employed in Education and Professional Services. There is also a high proportion of research-based industry associated with the UNE. These businesses have the need for high](#)

bandwidth applications but are hindered from the lack of capacity. The UNE also has the need to deliver distance education and research-based services as such is limited to existing capacity. As an example, the UNE would welcome the opportunity to deliver remote education, training, professional development and other services to students, GPs and the community etc but they are limited by the capacity of broadband services within Armidale and surrounding regions. Local Government also has a need to deliver services and to realise efficiency gains through the use of technology however, there are two factors limiting the achievement of these objectives - capacity and existing costs.

- g. Will installation interrupt supply of ordinary local government services? Will the roll-out ultimately enhance the supply of ordinary local government services?

Interruption of local government services - the major interruption will be to the available access to road services brought about by rollout activities and the potential for part or full road closures. As we haven't had detailed discussions on how the roll out will be performed by the contractors undertaking the work, disruption to road services is undetermined. If construction works are not well coordinated, with Council and other utility authorities' involvement, other services such as normal telecommunications, water, sewer and gas services may be disrupted by breakages during trenching or underground boring operations. An unknown quantum of Council resource to meet demand to locate services or provide traffic control may reduce Council's ability to meet normal service levels reducing service delivery to the community during the construction phase. Preconstruction planning around these areas will quantify these demands.

Yes, it is expected that Local Government services and the delivery of the services will be enhanced by the NBN. This will ultimately depend on the ability of local government to access the new network (at competitive prices) either directly or through a retail service provider and the cost of accessing the new services by the community.

- h. To what extent are local planning policies affected by the NBN roll-out? What is being done by NBN Co / the Council / other bodies to address these matters?

In NSW the necessary planning arrangements are embraced largely within a State Environmental Planning Policy.

Please see the attached summary we have prepared, which we will be using in further discussions with NBN Co and their consultants starting from today.

Kind regards,

Stephen Gow & David Steller  
**Directors Planning and Environmental Services / Engineering and Works**  
Armidale Dumaresq Council

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