



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Wide Bay Electorate: Broadband

SPEECH

Tuesday, 26 June 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 26 June 2012
Page 8111
Questioner
Speaker Truss, Warren, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of The Nationals) (16:06): For residents of Wide Bay, Labor's \$50 billion NBN stands for No Broadband Network, at least until well past 2016. That is the reality of the NBN for the vast majority of people in Wide Bay. All they have are cardboard trucks and a saturation advertising campaign that just makes them angry. Of the 94,128 people enrolled to vote in my electorate, only 213 have connected to the NBN, and not one is connected by the much vaunted fibre-optic cable—there is no sign of that in Wide Bay. Nor are they connected by high-speed wireless—on coming to office, Labor scrapped the coalition's OPEL contract, which would have been delivering wireless broadband to the whole nation by now. Those 213 people are connected to the NBN using pre-existing satellite technology.

Under Labor's fibre-optic rollout plan people in Wide Bay will have to wait until at least 2016—after another two federal elections—before they see anyone connected to Labor's NBN cable. It is another broken promise from Labor, who promised to deliver high-speed broadband to 98 per cent of Australians from 2008 at a cost of \$4.7 billion. Now under Labor's plan only 93 per cent will receive a fibre-optic connection, and it will take an extra 10 years and cost at least \$50 billion to roll out.

Labor's NBN is an expensive, cruel hoax in Wide Bay, but it gets worse. Labor's NBN policy settings are potentially jeopardising lives. If you purchase a property in a new housing estate that contains more than 100 allotments you will find that Telstra is not allowed to install a landline. Instead, the allotments in these estates have to be left NBN-ready for whenever, if ever, the NBN arrives. So if you have built your dream home and then move in expecting to have a landline connection available to you, at least for the interim, you will be disappointed, because the government has legislated to prevent you being able to install a landline service. Instead, you will be offered a wireless device. That might be fine for somebody who lives close to a transmitter and where the signal strength and data capacity are sufficient, but if you have a medical condition that requires you to have a landline in order to connect a medical alert device your life could be in jeopardy. If you have a medical alert device, you must have access to a landline for it to work. The Telstra devices work only in conjunction with a landline. So, if you have a serious medical condition and have moved into to a new housing estate with more than 100 allotments and an emergency arises, your life could be at risk because the government has said you cannot have a landline and that means that you cannot have a medical alert device. It is inconceivable that the government would deliberately obstruct landline connections when its broadband network could take a decade or longer to offer the service. (*Time expired*)