



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Broadband

SPEECH

Monday, 21 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Sidebottom, Sid, MP

Source House
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Responder
Question No.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (9.35 pm)—Only a few weeks ago the community cabinet visited my electorate of Braddon and I was able to reflect on some of the \$450 million worth of investment by this government in my region. In many instances, the government is copartnering with the local government in my region and with the state government. I am very proud that one aspect of that investment is the National Broadband Network. Indeed, Smithton in the far north-west of my electorate, which you have visited on a number of occasions, Mr Speaker, was one of the three starting points in Australia for the National Broadband Network. I was very pleased in April 2009 to be with the Prime Minister and the Premier of Tasmania when it was announced that the NBN was coming to Tasmania and again in July when the details of the rollout were announced and Smithton was to be one of the starting points.

Again, in August, we heard of the establishment of the NBN Co. in Tasmania, namely NBN Tasmania. In October 2009, the shovels began work. They began work certainly in Smithton. Only as recently as June, only a few days ago, the network operation centre was opened in Hobart. I am very pleased to be able to say that there has been a pleasing 48 per cent take-up by eligible premises in the three locations from round 1. Nearly 50 per cent of eligible people have registered to have the fibre-optic high-speed network set up to go to their homes. That is an excellent result indeed.

That is the wholesale connection. What we are waiting for now is the retail connections. They will come when we have myriad retailers offering a variety of prices, and thus the competition will begin. Indeed, three providers have already announced that they are interested in the NBN up my way. I notice that one of those is Internode, and they are offering plans of 25 megabits per second, costing just \$29.95 and, for 100 megabits per second, offering start-up plans of \$59.95. That is a fantastic start. As one of the proponents argues, ‘of course we believe price is the catalyst for rapid adoption.’

I know we are on a good thing because those opposite tried a few questions today in question time on the NBN but their back bench were very quiet behind it I can tell you. I knew I had hit paydirt when up in the Main Committee the member for Maranoa was moaning his head off that this ‘won’t be a goer’

and ‘it won’t go here and it won’t go there’. Of course, what he was really angry about is that Telstra has now come on board with NBN, as would be the case anyway, sensibly, and now we truly have a new telecommunications structure for the 21st century and onwards. I notice a number of commentators on this matter claim that it is not only important that this new structure works here; I notice the ITU and UNESCO are looking at this set-up very carefully from overseas. It is the view of people like Paul Budde that:

Declining telcoms revenues worldwide are an indication that we are reaching the end of the telcoms model which—

Telstra has been using for around 50 years. So, he argues:

... with or without the NBN, the traditional telcoms will have to come up with new revenue streams anyway.

So the NBN is a goer. Telstra is on board and this system will begin to roll out not just in Tasmania but throughout the nation, and its capacity and its potential is absolutely enormous. (*Time expired*)