



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Hasluck Electorate: Broadband**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 10 September 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Monday, 10 September 2012  <b>Page</b> 113  <b>Questioner</b>  <b>Speaker</b> Wyatt, Ken, MP</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House  <b>Proof</b> Yes  <b>Responder</b>  <b>Question No.</b></p>
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**Mr WYATT** (Hasluck) (22:18): I rise today to acknowledge the serious lack of broadband services in my electorate of Hasluck and to speak about the efforts to bring them to the government's attention, particularly the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. Again and again, Hasluck residents do not receive their fair share of government resources. This is particularly the case when it comes to the snail's-pace rollout of the National Broadband Network.

The coalition agrees that people living in remote areas of Australia need better access to broadband services. Indeed, many in the suburbs less than 30 minutes from the Perth CBD need them, too. Where we disagree is the method of making this a reality. The coalition favours real-world solutions, tried and tested and cost effective. Sadly, the Labor government favours broadbrush approaches to policy at the cost of many tens of billions of dollars.

The recently revised NBN corporate plan reveals spending on payroll and corporate overheads are far higher than expected, while the NBN Co. now needs an additional \$2.9 billion of equity investment from taxpayers. It is no surprise that Labor's NBN now carries a total price tag of at least \$44 billion dollars. That is without factoring in the cost of any further delays or budget overruns and also excludes up to \$10 billion in budget interest payments on the borrowed money being used to fund the network.

Aside from the astronomical cost, the biggest concern to constituents in my electorate is the time taken for the NBN to reach them. My constituents are constantly faced with the same response from Telstra when complaining about the lack of service to parts of Hasluck. Telstra says that the upgrades to services will now not be taking place, as the NBN will rectify gaps in services. According to NBN Co., however, work will not begin in most areas of Hasluck until late into 2013.

The NBN's fibre network is now forecast to reach only one in four of the households originally expected to be able to connect to it by mid-2013. According to the government, the delays can be made up. But consider this: since the first user switched to the fibre network in mid-2010, the NBN has connected new customers at a rate of six per working day. To meet the targets in

the new corporate plan, more than 6,000 customers per working day must be switching to the NBN by 2015.

After almost five years in office, Labor's broadband policies are in disarray. Hundreds of thousands of Australians in areas desperately in need of broadband access or upgraded services are not even on the NBN three-year road map. This is unacceptable. To help the coalition understand the needs of my constituents in Hasluck, I invited the shadow minister for communications and broadband—the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull—to visit and hear their stories firsthand. For those in the south of my electorate where the majority of issues with a lack of internet services are, I organised a broadband forum, and Malcolm spoke to a very well-informed crowd of local residents.

The same story was repeated over and over: dismay at the current circumstances and questions on what the coalition would do differently.

The coalition's alternative broadband policy will be more financially responsible. Taxpayers' money needs to be treated with respect. It will provide all Australians with fast, affordable broadband as soon as possible. That means in the next term of parliament, not a decade from now. The most sensible and efficient way to achieve this is by taking advantage of the lessons learnt from broadband policies around the world. The most important lesson is that, while fibre needs to be extended deeper into networks—that is, closer to homes and businesses—it does not need to go to every doorstep to deliver superfast broadband.

The next day I took Mr Turnbull to meet with the City of Swan, a fantastic local government in my electorate and the biggest LGA in the Perth metropolitan area. Following this, we spoke to many constituents in the north of Hasluck, specifically Midland, about issues to do with broadband connectivity and the need for quality service to the area if local businesses are to truly thrive and stay active in the region. Malcolm and I headed back down south, to Southern River, to hold a meeting with local families that are living in a broadband black spot. I am confident that the coalition has the ability and the experience to make a real difference in this area, if and when we are elected to government.

I call on Minister Conroy to intervene and actually try to speed up the rollout, which, in turn, will save taxpayers' money and improve services to everyday Australians in my electorate of Hasluck. In particular, I heard stories about the greenfield sites that are prepared and about the homes connected to the fibre, but they will not be connected until the NBN is rolled out in that area. I find it fascinating that South Perth and Como, which have high-quality cables, are high on the agenda for the rollout of the NBN, which does not make sense when there are areas of greater need.