



AFFORDABLE HIGH SPEED BROADBAND CONNECTING ALL AUSTRALIANS

The Greens' plan to protect the National Broadband Network

The NBN holds out the promise of a new age of productivity, innovation and global connection for Australians. It will provide health care, education, telecommuting opportunities, carbon-free conferencing and will shrink the distances between services in Australia.

The Australian Greens support the building of a Fibre to the Home National Broadband Network because we know the NBN will create enormous opportunities for Australia's future.

As Australia transitions away from an economy based on resource-depletion, the Greens believe telecommunications will play an increasingly vital role.

Information and Communications Technology is now a fundamental component of business operations, is changing the way business is conducted and is instrumental in generating productivity and efficiency gains.

NBN Co is behind schedule and will have to work hard to catch up on lost time, but the Fibre to the Home proposal is still vastly superior to the Opposition's part-privatised patchwork which will require the installation of 70-80,000 powered cabinets and entrench a two-tier telecommunications network.

The Greens are committed to keeping the NBN on course and preventing attempts to demolish progress on this critical infrastructure reform.

> GREENS HAVE IMPROVED THE NBN

Greens have worked to improve the NBN at every step of planning and legislation that preceded fibre roll out.

The Greens provided detailed amendments to each piece of legislation, extracting answers at each Senate Estimates opportunity to engage with NBN Co and through membership of the NBN Joint Committee in the parliament, which has produced 5 reports.

The Greens support the business model that sees the cities subsidise the bush. It is going to be more expensive to roll out the NBN in regional and rural areas – Australia is a big country

but we should be treated equally and be able to access services no matter where we live.

The Greens insisted on amendments that ensured information about the roll out of the NBN was available under the Freedom of Information Act – it's a huge project and it's strongly in the public interest to know how it's going. Initial government legislation exempted it from FOI scrutiny.

The Greens worked with the government to structurally separate Telstra's wholesale arm – to repair the damage that was caused when Telstra was privatised. The impact of a vertically integrated state owned monopoly being in the market was that competition was squashed and monopoly power was leveraged into new markets.

The Greens won amendments to ensure that any future moves to privatise the NBN will be subject to a review to protect the public interest and will require the approval of Parliament. Initially the Government planned to sell the network to the private sector upon completion. That would be a mistake given this essential infrastructure will play increasing roles in health care, education and government services. It would also mean the parliament and Australians would not be able to play the watchdog role.

The primary overriding purpose of the publicly owned NBN is to serve as an open access wholesale telecommunications provider to the entire Australian population. When problems occur, the taxpayers have the right, through the Parliament, to call the management before budget Estimates Committees, and to amend its parent acts to bring it back into line.

Privatise it, and by law, its primary purpose under Australian law is to maximise its return to shareholders. It will do this by doing what Telstra did, leveraging the benefits of incumbency into other markets, explore scope creep, push the boundaries.



The market and many analysts understand that as natural monopoly infrastructure it is appropriate for an entity accountable to the public to operate the hardware, while market forces predominate at the retail service layer.

> PREVENTING FRAUDBAND

The Greens are committed to keeping the NBN on course and preventing attempts by the Coalition to demolish progress on this critical infrastructure reform.

The Coalition's broadband policy is faster and may be cheaper for a reason: it provides a quick fix that we will regret.

Their proposal would leave existing customers stranded on obsolete copper while new estates get glass fibre installed.

It involves the installation of tens of thousands of powered cabinets on street corners around the country that would be enormously expensive to maintain and vulnerable to weather events.

This approach was explicitly rejected in 2009 prior to the Government's announcement of the fibre-to-the home project, because it would be obsolete on the day it was built.

The Coalition is continuously playing politics with policy, which is why we need Greens holding the balance of power in the Senate to keep a check on Abbott's ridiculous plans and to stand up with a strong alternative voice.

> ACCESS FOR ALL

The roll-out of the NBN often provokes discussion about business, productivity and exporting digital productions to the world in a cost competitive environment.

However, the NBN is also about opening up opportunities and access to services to Australians that are disadvantaged, living with disabilities, in Aboriginal communities and in rural and regional areas.

The NBN will alter how health services are delivered, revolutionising the delivery of diagnosis especially in remote areas, shrinking the distance between specialists and people in need of their care.

The NBN will also alter education, providing online courses to those who have equal access to the technology. This will open up the world of learning to many people, particularly women, who cannot afford to stop working or travel to universities.

Indigenous communities will be able to use the NBN to communicate their experience, their art, and has the possibility to keep families communicating who are separated by great distance.

More funding to connect local councils to the NBN and provide training for small businesses and NGOs in regional Australia is an important opportunity provided by reliable, affordable broadband.

Geraldton is the first regional centre in WA to have every household connected. The availability of the NBN and the flexibility it provides to Geraldton's population is central to its vision of a liveable, engaged, research centre, an economically viable and carbon neutral city.

Senior Australians are the fastest growing online user group. While they will benefit from the health, education opportunities that all Australians will enjoy, as they did not grow up in a digital age, it will be important they are provided with necessary training to ensure they enjoy the benefits of participating in the digital age.

The officials and the workers who built this country's copper network a century ago did a great service to their nation, but that copper network can't deliver the fast broadband the modern economy demands. Without this investment in NBN infrastructure, Australia will struggle to match world's best standard for telecommunications.

> DIGITAL RIGHTS

The Greens believe that the benefits of the internet can be available safely with the human right to privacy and civil liberties intact, but only if we pay very careful attention to the balance that is being struck between these freedoms and our obligations as citizens.

The Greens oppose internet censorship, data retention and warrantless surveillance and believe that law enforcement and intelligence agencies should be required to get a warrant before accessing your telecommunications data. The Greens introduced the Telecommunications Amendment (Get a Warrant) Bill to the parliament in June 2013.

The Greens are the only Australian political party asking questions and demanding explanation about our government's complicity in PRISM, the collection of Australians emails, audio and video chats, photographs, documents, connection logs and location data.

For more Greens work on NBN and Digital Rights see:

NBN: <http://scott-ludlam.greensmps.org.au/campaigns/national-broadband-network-key-australias-digital-prosperity>

PRISMbreak <http://scott-ludlam.greensmps.org.au/prism>

Wikileaks: <http://scott-ludlam.greensmps.org.au/wikileaks>

Defending digital freedoms <http://scott-ludlam.greensmps.org.au/campaigns/defending-digital-freedom-right-liberty-and-security-online>