



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2010

MOTION: NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (4.45 pm): I am pleased to second the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, that this House supports a fast, reliable and affordable broadband service for Queenslanders. The NBN's Tasmanian pilot program is a real-world demonstration of the economic incompetence, sheer hypocrisy and rank political opportunism that puts Labor's political interests ahead of good government and good policy.

Stephen Conroy and the Tasmanian government continue to refuse to tell the public how many people have actually signed up to this pilot. What have we learned from a pilot that has cost up to \$700 million? We had an admission from the Labor Tasmanian Premier that he is considering making the NBN an opt-out program for Tasmanians, a sign that he wants to force residents to sign up. Why should it be compulsory to sign up for a program that is supposed to successfully deliver everything Gillard and Labor have promised? To date, only about a half of the 4,000 houses—with no mention of businesses—eligible for the nation's first NBN rollout have accepted the offer of cable links into their homes. This is no surprise, considering Conroy admitted he had not made any calculation of the likely take-up rate, despite estimated costs of between \$500 million and \$700 million. More Labor economic incompetence indeed!

Yesterday in this House the honourable member for Rockhampton rambled on in his usual manner before tabling a document titled 'Queensland cities and towns getting optical fibre'. By doing so, he let the cat out of the bag about what Labor's much vaunted NBN might or might not provide. As usual, Minister Swarten makes a lot of noise, as he did a few minutes ago, about Labor's so-called ICT achievements, but the facts do not ever match the rhetoric. Documents that the minister tabled prove that Gillard's uncosted \$43 billion NBN cannot guarantee the high level of service to rural and regional Queensland that he demands. He supports a plan that self-admits it cannot deliver the services it promises. Minister Swarten did not want us to see what Gillard's plan actually delivers. Queenslanders should read the fine print before rushing into believing Bligh's Labor. The document states—

This is an indicative list of towns that will receive some fibre coverage. Many of these towns will also receive some wireless coverage. The list is based on initial detailed modelling work done by NBN Co which may be subject to change following more detailed planning and design work.

The statement continues—

The fibre modelling is based on NBN Co's current optical fibre design rules rather than detailed premise and density and may not result in contiguous coverage of all locations within the indicated fibre footprint.

Minister Swarten could not even spell the word 'optical' in his media releases let alone understand what it means. Let us take a look at Minister Swarten's ICT achievements. Labor's previous broadband revolution, Project Vista, disappeared without a trace. Premier Beattie called this a leading Smart State project. It was due to start in 2007 with a network to run along existing power lines—another failed project; another broken promise.

Queensland Health's payroll system, Swarten's \$40 million plus white elephant that cannot pay health workers correctly, has cost \$4 million plus since the go live and there is no solution in sight. But then there is the Shared Service Initiative—a \$900 million turkey that governments across Australia point to as a textbook example of how not to run government IT projects. With this track record of achievements it is

no wonder taxpayers should be highly suspicious about trusting Gillard, Bligh and Labor with their \$43 billion NBN promise.

An article last week in the *Australian* by Grahame Lynch, the founder of telco newsletter *Communications Day* and a former editorial director of *America's Network*, said—

The ALP government's \$43 billion policy, at \$2000 a head of population is the most expensive government intervention of its kind in the world. The Coalition policy—at \$300 a head—actually ranks comparably to that of Singapore's national broadband network ... which costs about \$200 a head, and New Zealand's at about \$330.

Grahame says that many of the benefits touted by Labor can be delivered by platforms in the coalition's plan which excels economically by acknowledging the already substantial broadband infrastructure in place capable of supporting speeds of 30 to 100 megabits per second. This was recommended by the government's own NBN implementation study. True to form, though, this Labor government will say and do anything to get a vote. After all, it is in their DNA.

(Time expired)