

# THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM CCHQ 2016

*The Plan for a Strong New Economy*



13 June 2016

## TRANSCRIPT OF SENATOR THE HON. MITCH FIFIELD MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS DOORSTOP INTERVIEW, MELBOURNE

*Subjects: nbn*

E&EO.....

### MITCH FIFIELD:

Bill Shorten confirmed today that under a Labor government, Australians will have to wait longer for the NBN and pay more. Under a Labor government, two million Australians will have to wait at least two years more to get the NBN and at \$8 billion additional cost compared to the Coalition's plan.

Now Labor's policy today is based on two great deceits. The first is that they will deliver the NBN according to the same timetable as the Coalition. That's wrong. The Coalition is on track to deliver the NBN nationwide by 2020. Labor want to add two years to that, to make Australian's wait until 2022. The second great deceit is that Labor's approach to the nbn will cost only \$1 billion more than the Coalition. Again, that is wrong. Labor say that their approach will cost \$57 billion and that's a billion dollars more than the Coalition. The only problem with that is that NBN's own corporate plan says that they aim to and that they are on track to deliver the NBN at \$49 billion. That's an \$8 billion difference. So under Labor, the NBN will take at least two years longer to deliver and cost \$8 billion more.

When the Coalition came into office, it inherited a mess from the previous Labor government. Malcolm Turnbull brought order to bear where there was chaos. So badly managed was the NBN, that it had missed its 2013 roll-out targets by 83% or a million premises. So badly managed was the NBN under Labor, that they were in a situation in four states where contractors had downed tools. So badly managed was the NBN under Labor, that after six years in office and \$6.5 billion spent, they had only managed to hook up 51,000 paying customers. Now in contrast, just this last month the Government and the NBN have hooked up 61,000 paying customers. That's 10,000 more than Labor achieved over their six years in office.

The story of the NBN under this Government has been a good one. With a new board, a new management, a new attitude and a new mandate, NBN now have 1 million paying customers. NBN now have its product available to 2.6 million Australians. By the end of this

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financial year, 25% of Australian premises will be able to access the NBN. By the end of the following financial year half of all premises in Australia will be able to and by September 2018, three-quarters of Australian premises will be able to access the NBN. And, as I say, we're on track for 2020. NBN has met every one of its milestones over the last 8 quarters. It's on track and on Budget in terms of revenue and expenditure. So it's a good story. The only threat to the NBN roll-out is Labor's plan to make Australians wait longer and to have Australians pay more. We know how Labor will seek to have Australians pay more and that's through their monthly internet bills.

## **QUESTION:**

Are there any parts of Labor's nbn policy you support?

## **MITCH FIFIELD:**

I don't support the NBN being delayed by two years and I don't support the NBN costing \$8 billion extra. I'm being kind here and taking Labor's figuring at face value. But I would hazard a guess that whatever Labor does, will cost substantially more than \$8 billion. Labor is also holding out the hope that through Infrastructure Australia they might go back and retrofit those premises that already have fibre-to-the-node. Labor haven't told us what that will cost. We're looking at something higher than \$8 billion. We've got the \$8 billion from their own mouth for today's proposition but how much is their proposition to go back and retrofit other properties who have fibre-to-the-node going to cost. Labor need to come clean on that.

## **QUESTION:**

Do you think your party's NBN policy is really just a short-term fix?

## **MITCH FIFIELD:**

No, ours is a method to get the NBN out to Australians sooner and faster. That is the mandate we've given to NBN, is to see the NBN rolled out as fast as possible and at lowest cost.

What that means is the macro-economic benefits of everyone being connected will be available far sooner than under Labor's approach. Thank you.

[ends]