



**SENATOR THE HON MITCH FIFIELD**

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS  
MANAGER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IN THE SENATE

**TRANSCRIPT**

**Doorstop interview  
Liberal candidate for Indi Steve Martin  
Senator Jane Hume  
Head of NBN Local (Victoria and Tasmania) Ebony Aitken  
Junction Place, Wodonga  
1:15pm  
14 March 2019**

**E & OE**

**Subject: NBN rollout in Indi**

**FIFIELD:**

Well, it's great to be in Wodonga with the Liberal Candidate for Indi Steve Martin and with my Senate colleague Jane Hume, to announce that the NBN in the electorate of Indi is now available to 99 per cent of the electorate.

There's been a deliberate effort to front end load the NBN rollout in rural and regional Australia, given the historic lack of connectivity that the regions have had compared to the capital cities.

Earlier today, we announced the switch on of NBN in Bright and Porepunkah. More than 2000 homes and businesses can now access the NBN in that area. We visited the Bright Brewery, which is one of the first businesses to have the NBN switched on. So it's good news for Bright and Porepunkah, and good news for the electorate of Indi as a whole.

**JOURNALIST:**

So how many people are switched on across Indi?

**FIFIELD:**

Across Indi, the NBN is available to 99 per cent of premises. About 50 per cent of residences in the electorate, more than 40,000 premises, have already switched on to the NBN. So it's available to pretty much everyone. And nationwide, the NBN is now available to 75 per cent of premises. And the NBN will be all done and dusted and available to everyone by 2020, which is six to eight years sooner than would have been the case under our predecessors and at \$30 billion less cost. And that's important because if we'd persisted with the path of the Labor Party, Australians would be paying

**Media contacts:**

Geraldine Mitchell | 0407 280 476 | [Geraldine.Mitchell@communications.gov.au](mailto:Geraldine.Mitchell@communications.gov.au)  
Guy Creighton | 0438 815 302 | [Guy.Creighton@communications.gov.au](mailto:Guy.Creighton@communications.gov.au)

\$500 a year more for their internet than what will be the case. But I'll ask Steve Martin to talk a little bit about the NBN rollout and his experiences on the ground and then Jane Hume, and also Ebony from NBN. Steve?

**STEVE MARTIN:**

Fantastic. Thanks, Mitch. It's an exciting day. It's over 2000 households and businesses will be able to access it in Bright and Porepunkah from the switch on today. It's a big milestone, but there's still work to be done. And as I've been to a lot of places around Indi, people are still keen to see their services improve. And in talking to Mitch Fifield today, one of the things I've been excited by is the number of upgrades that are still in the system plan, particularly for the fixed wireless network, but also the new packages that will come online for businesses, and for individuals who are looking for more data or faster internet as well.

**FIFIELD:**

Senator Hume.

**JANE HUME:**

Yeah, this is a terrific day for Indi. Some of you might remember that I was up here about two and a half, nearly three years ago now and we were talking to a number of residents about their concerns and their trepidation towards the NBN. Well, today we're talking about the opportunities that NBN can provide, and particularly with these small businesses, how they can improve their productivity, how they can help their businesses to grow. So congratulations, Minister, I think this is a really terrific announcement; and congratulations to the good people of Indi, too.

**FIFIELD:**

Thanks, Senator. Ebony, the local NBN manager for Victoria and Tasmania, can you give us an update on the northeast rollout?

**EBONY AITKEN:**

Thank you, Minister. Yes, so across the northeast of Victoria, we've now got more than 138,000 homes and businesses on our fixed line and our fixed wireless network that can now connect.

There's a couple of tips that we do recommend for people who are looking at connecting to the network. Think about the number of devices you've got in the home between peak time – so seven to 11pm and then think about the type of plan you might want; have a conversation with your provider. And then that third piece is really around your connection PC, your in home or your business set up so think about where your modem might be placed – you're going to want that somewhere centrally.

We actually have a gentleman right here in Wodonga Danny Jones who has a photography business at home; needed to run an additional cable back down

because of the type of business, to make sure that he could get the speed that he needed. So a bunch of information on our website that we'd encourage people to look at before they make a switch.

**JOURNALIST:**

Can you tell us what's being done to help communities such as Chiltern where people can access the NBN on farms but not actually in town?

**EBONY AITKEN:**

So the important point to make - everyone has access to the NBN; a number of technologies, either our fixed line, our fixed wireless or our satellite, are certainly one of the things that myself and my team do as we get out on the ground to get into those areas, particularly in satellite areas to make sure that people have our NBN teams on hand to answer those questions to make sure that everybody knows how to connect.

**JOURNALIST:**

But they can't use it? They work on the farm but not in town?

**EBONY AITKEN:**

It depends on whether the network is actually switched on in town. And so I would certainly encourage people to jump on our website, that will tell them when they can connect to the network and if they're able to connect. And again, certainly the conversation around speed for the first time in history, people do have a choice of speed, and that's why asking that question around the same time is so important.

**JOURNALIST:**

But it's our understanding that Chiltern will never be connected fully to the NBN.

**FIFIELD:**

No. Every premise in Australia will be connected to the NBN. That's the absolute guarantee of the Government. Every home and every business in the nation will have access to the NBN. In the electorate of Indi it's 99 per cent of premises can access the NBN. There's still a little bit of work in some areas. There's still a fixed wireless tower in Dinner Plain which is still yet to be activated. In Chiltern, I understand the town centre will have fixed line access and that's still yet to be deployed. But everywhere will have access to the NBN.

**JOURNALIST:**

So obviously, NBN is almost rolled out in most places but will it become redundant once 5G is in place?

**FIFIELD:**

5G will be a complement to the fixed line network. Mobile data is about six times more expensive than data on the fixed line network. So the mobile network will not replace the fixed line network. And every mobile network including the future 5G network will still need a fibre backbone. So there's a range of uses of which people avail themselves on mobile devices, but still the fixed line network will be very important.

**JOURNALIST:**

But just to clarify around Chiltern, are services offered to towns such as Chiltern and there are a number in north east Victoria, aren't they inferior services with the wireless and satellite services not true NBN?

**FIFIELD:**

Well, the NBN uses a range of technologies. In the fixed line part of the network; there's fibre to the node; fibre to the premise, fibre to the curb. For other areas where fixed line is cost prohibitive, NBN uses a mixture of satellite and fixed wireless. Both satellite and fixed wireless are good services. And everyone will have access to the NBN through one of those technologies.

**[ends]**

