



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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### MOTION: NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.55 pm): Remember when Labor and Kevin Rudd claimed to be economic conservatives? Well they dumped that pretence quicker than they knifed Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister. I never go into a shop without checking the price tag of what I buy. Price does affect my choices and determines the value of a product. I know that it certainly impacts on the choices of the residents of Queensland and certainly impacts on the choices of those who live in my electorate. It particularly impacts on the thousands of ordinary Queenslanders who do not have a government pay packet to rely on.

Why then does Labor want to keep it secret as to how much it will really cost Queenslanders to connect to its \$43 billion NBN plan and how much it will cost people in terms of ongoing costs? We in the LNP are fighting for Queenslanders to have a fast, reliable and affordable internet service, not Labor's proposal which is the world's most expensive. There is no business case.

I heard Minister Schwarten bag the importance of having a business case just a few minutes ago. We think that a government that has sent this state broke in a boom should wake up to itself and realise that it does matter what we pay for our infrastructure because eventually people have to pay it back. And guess what? It is poor old taxpayers—the ones it treats like mugs—who have to do that.

Business cases do matter. This minister and the modern Labor Party still believe that they do not matter and they can force this cost upon people. It is embarrassing to see the abuse of power by this government and the way it spends billions and does not do a business case or a cost benefit analysis. Instead it is asking Labor members and other parliamentarians to turn off their brains and vote blindly in favour of the NBN and jump over the cliff like the proverbial lemmings who followed the leader without checking the direction they were going in. Doing that has a very high price.

Labor's NBN is a new monopoly which Australians will pay more for in their taxes in access fees. The creation of a new telecommunications monopoly by Labor is not a virtue; it is a vice. It has been forced on people. In the days before Telstra was open to competition Australians paid some of the highest telecommunications costs in the world. Rather than taking us to the future, Labor intends to take us back to the past where government controls things by costly monopoly which is anti-innovation and is just jobs for boys. The government's role should be to stimulate competition and ensure that where there is market failure people have access to services. It should not be, as Labor's plan is, to strangle competition and remonopolise services with mandatory higher costs.

Do not forget that Labor's NBN will be brought to us by the same mob who gave us Australia's pink batt fiasco of burnt houses and, tragically, people who lost their lives as well as the school building rip-off. They now think they can build a more cost-effective internet service for the nation than the private sector. Well, pigs might fly! This is being endorsed by state Labor—this mob that went broke in a boom and then decided that it would help others go broke by putting up their taxes in an economic downturn.

We say that Australians have a right to know how much it will cost them individually, and certainly the residents of my electorate of Maroochydore want to know how much it will cost. We have heard that in

Tasmania the expected connection cost is between \$300 and \$800. That is not to mention the ongoing operational costs. But, no, Labor does not want to talk about that individual cost to people. It wants that to be a secret. The NBN should be renamed 'NOM'—'not our money', brought to you by Labor polities on high salaries and their indentured help who forget that it is ordinary Australians who end up repaying that debt.

I also call on this Labor government to explain what happened to the other internet programs and Reef access that it was promising and access to some of the highest speed internet along the rail services in Australia—I table a number of clippings in relation to that—because we deserve to know what happened to these programs.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of documents, including newspaper articles and ministerial statements, relating to broadband cable [\[2774\]](#).

When Telstra was being opened up to competition, Chris Griffith stated that that was good because it would be more competitive, more technologically advanced and cheaper for consumers. It did not rely on a platform of one provider!

*(Time expired)*