THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

STATEMENT

17 November 2021

Labor can't be trusted on the NBN

Labor cannot be trusted in Government.

Not on climate change. Not on national security. And certainly not on the NBN.

Under six years of Labor, just 51,000 premises were connected to the fixed-line NBN at a cost of $6 billion.

The Coalition's NBN track record is clear: after we inherited a train wreck project in 2013, today there are 12 million premises able to connect, and 8.3 million already connected to the NBN.

In late 2020, the Morrison Government committed $4.5 billion to making ultra-fast broadband of up to 1Gbps available on demand to 8 million premises across regional and metropolitan Australia by 2023, and we are already well advanced in delivering on that commitment.

Nothing in what Labor is now proposing adds to our existing commitment before 2023; NBN is fully committed to delivering the existing upgrade.

At least Labor has now accepted the Coalition's efficient model of fibre on demand – abandoning its previous signature policy of fibre to every premise, regardless of whether it is wanted or not.

But as usual, there's a catch.

Labor needs to explain how this will be funded – instead of offering murky comments referring to a "combination" of funding sources.

It's clear that what Labor proposes here is more wasteful government spending of taxpayers money. That's what Labor does – because that's what Labor is good at.

Whereas the Coalition is steadily reducing the NBN's loan from the Commonwealth – with more than $11 billion already repaid to Australian taxpayers.

The Morrison Government's announcement last year deliberately and clearly demonstrated exactly how our NBN upgrade would be funded: by $4.5 billion from private investment raised by NBN Co.

Only the Coalition can be trusted to deliver an upgraded NBN.

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