



Media Release

NBN Co

18 April, 2012

NBN satellite plans on track, says world satellite body

The United Nations communications agency has informed NBN Co that the company's plans to launch two satellites to deliver broadband to remote regions of Australia are following the correct approvals process.

Advice received overnight from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) says it is not uncommon for a company such as NBN Co to purchase satellites before having finalised their positions in orbit over Australia.

The advice follows assertions made at a Parliamentary committee hearing this week that NBN Co was taking an unnecessarily risky approach.

However in its statement the Geneva-based agency said:

"It is possible for a company to purchase a satellite in advance of it being put into use and the orbital slots being finalised.

"In order to secure those slots the notifying authority, which in Australia is the Australian Communications and Media Authority, needs to (a) initialise the registration procedure with the ITU, and (b) resolve any major compatibility issues with operators of neighbouring satellites.

"So long as there are no regional objections and the ITU registration process is underway an operator can proceed with its launch plans."

NBN Co has been proactively pursuing the ITU international frequency coordination process since August 2010.

Progress to date led NBN Co CEO Mike Quigley to inform Parliament's NBN committee this week that: "We expect formalities will be complete before the satellites are in orbit in 2015".

Expert advice

Among those engaged by NBN Co on the satellite frequency coordination process are internationally-acknowledged expert consultants in the field.

They include Mr. Bill Hope, former CTO, EVP and Managing Director Networks for Optus Australia and Singtel Singapore, and Mr. Hendrik Prins, a satellite regulatory specialist who has led Australian delegations to the ITU and has chaired joint ACMA and communications industry technical committees.

Mr. Hope, a senior executive at Optus and Singtel for 15 years from 1992-2007, commented:

"The ITU statement refutes utterly the suggestion that NBN Co is taking 'highly unusual risks' by signing contracts to build and launch satellites 'without securing their orbital parking spots first'. Anyone suggesting otherwise either does not understand the process or is being disingenuous.

"As the ITU says, it's not uncommon to launch a satellite before it has received final assent from the agency. I remember on one occasion at Optus the approvals process was so drawn out that the satellite

was entered into the ITU's Master Register several years after it had been launched and was nearing the end of its lifespan. That said, I anticipate no such problems with the NBN satellites."

Echoing Mr. Hope's remarks, Mr. Hendrik Prins commented:

"NBN Co is following the approach required by both ACMA and the ITU to engage in the international frequency coordination process. This is designed to ensure efficient use of the shared radiocommunications spectrum and other orbital resources.

"NBN Co's technical analyses, which were used to select the orbital locations, combined with the results of multiple meetings that have been held with sponsoring operators and nations responsible for other Ka-band satellites lead me to one conclusion:

"The ITU process that NBN Co has embarked on can be successfully completed on schedule and before the planned launch of the satellites in 2015."

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Notes to Editors

- In February 2012 NBN Co selected Space Systems/Loral (SS/L) of the United States, a leading manufacturer of commercial broadband satellites, to build two next-generation Ka-band satellites to bring high-speed internet to the 3% of homes, farms and businesses that reside in some of the most parts of Australia, including outback regions and external territories such as Norfolk Island, Christmas Island and the Cocos Islands.
- The awarding of the \$620 million contract was the result of a comprehensive, two-year procurement process. The contract is part of a total investment of approximately \$2 billion that is required to deliver the NBN Long Term Satellite Service. Other agreements will cover the ground systems, end-user equipment and the space launch.
- The first satellite launch planned for early 2015 and the second planned for the second half of 2015.
- For more information visit www.nbnco.com.au

*NBN Co is designing the NBN to be capable of delivering these speeds to NBN Co's wholesale customers (telephone and internet service providers). Speeds actually achieved by retail customers (end users) will depend on a number of factors including the quality of their equipment and in-premises connection, the broadband plans offered by their service provider and how their service provider designs its network to cater for multiple end users.