nbn Technology Choice Policy

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1 Introduction

Under existing Government policy, nbn has the flexibility to choose which technology should be rolled out in an area, making optimum use of available infrastructure to keep costs down and deliver fast broadband to Australia as soon as possible. nbn is currently deploying a range of technologies to optimise the use of available ‘fit-for-purpose’ network infrastructure to deliver the minimum data rates required by the Federal Government’s broadband policy.

The multi-technology principles mean that most households and businesses:

- already served by the Optus or Telstra Hybrid Fibre Coaxial (HFC) cable networks, will receive faster broadband speeds over an upgraded HFC network;
- where the nbn™ fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) network has been deployed or is in advanced stages of being built, will remain part of the FTTP rollout; and
- where the nbn™ fixed wireless or satellite networks are earmarked for deployment, will remain part of the Fixed Wireless or Satellite rollout.

All other communities are likely to receive fast broadband over fibre-to-the-node (FTTN) and, in the case of multi-dwelling units such as apartment blocks, fibre-to-the-basement (FTTB).

1.1 Technology Choice

Technology Choice provides a mechanism for interested parties to pay for a change to their nbn™ access technology.

nbn has developed a planning process which identifies which technology should be rolled out in an area, with what it believes to be the most practical and economic rollout schedule. nbn is required to make download data rates (and proportionate upload rates) of at least 25Mbps to all Australian premises and at least 50Mbps to 90 per cent of fixed-line premises as quickly as possible. Further information on the type of technologies planned for particular areas, and their rollout dates, are available on nbn’s website: www.nbnco.com.au/rolloutplan.

It is expected that the current rollout will meet the bandwidth needs of the vast majority of broadband users.

nbn has explored ways to meet community demand for additional bandwidth beyond what is planned in the initial rollout.

Applications for Technology Choice cover the following two options:

- A whole area
- Individual premises

1.2 Technology Choice Policy Statement

nbn was established to deliver Australia’s first national, wholesale-only, open access broadband network to all Australian homes, schools and businesses. nbn is deploying a range of different technologies to ensure a timely and efficient rollout.
nbn recognises that residential premises’ owners, business groups and local governments may be interested in upgrading their nbn connection from what is originally being provided via the nbn rollout to an alternative access technology.

To cater to this interest, and subject to certain requirements, feasibility and availability limitations, nbn offers the following two Technology Choice options:

- **Area Switch**: being the option to switch an eligible group of premises to an alternative NBN technology
- **Individual Premises Switch**: being the option to switch eligible individual premises to an alternative nbn technology

(‘HFC Individual Switch’, is currently undergoing further investigation through consultation.)

The cost to change technology infrastructure for Area Switch could range from tens of thousands of dollars to few millions of dollars and for Individual Premises Switch from few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars where the cost is generally dependent upon size and complexity of the project. As various factors will impact on the final cost to move to the alternate technology, nbn will assess every application individually taking these various factors into account in order to provide applicants with a high level cost estimate. For Area Switch applications, an Application Fee is payable to procure a cost estimation. For Individual Premises Switch applications a Build Quote Fee is payable to procure a fixed quote. The pricing sections (refer to sections 2.5 and 3.5) provide further detail about how nbn will determine the cost of moving to an alternate technology.

The Technology Choice program replaces the previous Network Extension program launched in July 2012. The Network Extension program enabled premises in the Satellite and Fixed-Wireless footprints to switch to an alternate technology, such as Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), these alternate technology options can now be accessed via the Technology Choice Program. This program not only offers upgrade paths from satellite and fixed wireless but also options of changing from the originally offered FTTN, FTTB and HFC networks. The previous Network Extension program ceases on the date of this Policy and no new applications will be accepted under that program.

Area Switch applications can be submitted for premises located, or planned to be located, in all footprint types within the announced footprint (except HFC). An Area Switch option for HFC is under consideration. Interested applicants should check the nbn website for updates.

Individual Premises Switch applications can be submitted now for premises that fall within nbn’s in service areas. Updates are posted on www.nbnco.com.au.
2 ‘Area Switch’ Option

2.1 Overview

The ‘Area Switch’ option provides the opportunity for interested parties, such as local and state governments, to fund the deployment of an alternative technology type across groups of premises.

An Area Switch application typically is a request for FTTP connections, rather than FTTN, FTTB, Satellite or Fixed Wireless connections. However, an Area Switch application may also include new Fixed Wireless, FTTB or new FTTN infrastructure.

nbn recommends that the minimum size of an Area Switch is one of the following:

- A whole node (150-350 premises)
- A whole Multi-Dwelling Unit (MDU).

Smaller Area Switches covering a portion of the premises in a node area may also be possible, but are unlikely to be as cost-efficient with regard to network deployment.

nbn is not able to provide advice to applicants, and makes no representation, about the advisability of an Area Switch in relation to any specific premises. It is important that applicants determine whether an alternate technology is advisable in their particular circumstances.

nbn’s quote for an Area Switch only covers the cost of design and installation of network infrastructure. Once the relevant network infrastructure has been built, tested and activated, end users may then order services from a Retail Service Provider (RSP).

Information about how to order a service from an RSP over the nbn can be found on: www.nbnco.com.au/getting-connected

2.2 Eligible Applicants

Applicants may be incorporated associations, bodies corporate of MDUs, local government authorities and state government bodies.

Applications for an Area Switch cannot be accepted from individuals who do not represent a whole area (for example, a town or an MDU).

2.3 nbn Considerations for Area Switches

On receipt of an Area Switch Application, nbn considers, at a minimum, the following:

1. Network rollout schedule - an Area Switch cannot be used:
   - To bring forward the proposed installation schedule for the premises
   - To change the rollout sequence

2. Extent to which an Area Switch can be performed within nbn’s existing design, network architecture and construction regime
3. **Ability to accommodate timeframes** regarding the availability of third party infrastructure which nbn may use, and its relative cost

4. **Timing of the application** - nbn may accept applications for an Area Switch:
   - within the planning and design, construction or post-construction stages of the nbn in the relevant location
   - however, applications received after the planning process may incur a higher cost, as it is more efficient to receive applications at the Planning & Design stage

5. **Proximity of the Applicant’s proposed location** to already constructed nbn infrastructure

6. **Size and coverage of the Area Switch** - applications may be submitted for a smaller number of premises than a whole node, however:
   - All premises covered by an application need to be contiguous, i.e. if the application covers 3 streets, it must include all the houses in the streets
   - If an application is submitted for an MDU, all premises in an MDU must be covered

### 2.4 Technology Options with Area Switches

The following Technology Choice options are available under Area Switch:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original nbn™ technology offering</th>
<th>New nbn™ technology offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fixed Wireless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed wireless</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTTN</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTTB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**
- ✓ Available now
- ✓ Under Development
- N/A = Not applicable

As the **nbn** rollout continues, the offerings available for Area Switch may expand.

**For Multi-Dwelling Units, from FTTB to FTTP**

**nbn** may accept applications with respect to MDUs (which may consist of, but not be limited to, apartments, blocks of units, high rises, industrial parks and multi-tenant commercial buildings) for a change of technology from the original FTTB option to FTTP.
nbn only considers applications for MDUs which are in announced rollout areas. Applicants need to be the authorised representatives of all the premises within that MDU (e.g. bodies corporate or property owners).

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications relating to MDUs as early as possible after the rollout areas are announced by nbn, so that buildings can be evaluated prior to network design work starting. Where an application for an FTTB Area Switch is received on completion of construction in that area, there may be additional costs associated with a re-design and new construction.

Note: It is highly recommended that interested and eligible Area Switch Applicants engage nbn at the earliest opportunity. In order to reduce the Applicants’ financial contribution and deployment resources, the most appropriate time to proceed with an FTTB to FTTP Area Switch application is prior to construction commencing.

Information on the timing of the nbn rollout can be found on: www.nbnco.com.au/check-your-address

2.5 Determining Financial Contributions

nbn determines an Applicant’s financial contributions for an Area Switch Build Quote on factors mentioned below. Following receipt of an application and subject to certain requirements, feasibility and availability limitations, nbn then provides an Area Switch Build Quote that outlines the payment structure for financial contribution required by the Applicant.

An Applicant’s financial contribution equals the difference between the cost of the originally planned technology and the new technology chosen for the Area Switch.

This contribution covers, but is not limited to, the following costs:

- Design and build of telecommunications infrastructure, including civil works required to remediate/build new pits/duct
- Acquiring access to third party infrastructure (if applicable)
- Construction of a ‘lead-in’ to the property (if required)
- Installation of the equipment in the premises

nbn determines the Area Switch Build Quote, based on the following:

- Location of each property, taking into account geography and distance from existing nbn infrastructure
- Cheapest route option within nbn’s network architectural constraints
- Time and cost to build the switch
- Costs of using third party infrastructure
- Environmental and planning approvals
- Deduction of savings that would be incurred if the original planned technology is not constructed
- Any other matters that nbn considers to be relevant

nbn may take into account some other factors including the circumstances of the applicant when considering options other than charging the full incremental costs when developing quotes.

Examples of costs associated with an Area Switch for different technology types are provided below.
Financial Contribution: Area Switch from FW/Satellite to a Fixed Line Technology

Where an Area Switch is requested for a town that is planned to be serviced with satellite or fixed wireless technologies, the cost involved in deploying new fixed line infrastructure is likely to be very high. A new fixed line access node must be deployed in an appropriate location (such as the telephone exchange), along with the deployment of distribution fibre, and in the case of FTTP, local fibre. If transit fibre is not planned to traverse the town as part of the nbn rollout, new transit infrastructure would also be required as part of the Area Switch.

As a guide, a number of previous applications for whole town Area Switches have resulted in estimated construction costs exceeding $1 million. The final cost will depend on the length of transit build and other factors.

Financial Contribution: Area Switch from FTTN to FTTP

The costs for an FTTN to FTTP Area Switch cover the design, purchasing, hauling and deployment of local fibre infrastructure throughout the FTTN ‘Distribution Area’. The node distribution area most likely covers the same location as the existing Telstra copper distribution area. Individual premises’ lead in and connection devices would also need to be deployed.

In the event that the existing copper infrastructure is direct buried or the existing Telstra pit and pipe requires remediation, the cost of either new or remediated civil works would be included in the Area Switch cost. This scenario could significantly increase the cost of the Area Switch.

The cost of Area Switches varies according to how much civil work is also required.

Financial Contribution: MDU Area Switch from FTTB to FTTP

The costs for an MDU Area Switch cover the design, purchasing, hauling and deployment of internal fibre infrastructure within the MDU. In some circumstances, fibre purchasing and hauling costs from the distribution network may also be required.

In general, the cost of MDU Area Switches varies according to the size of the MDU, the complexity and variability of the MDU floor layout and the available telecommunications cavity space between the floors and within the risers.

2.6 Application Process for an Area Switch

Interested parties submit an application for an Area Switch by Completing an Area Switch online Application Form on the Technology Choice section of nbn™ website at www.nbnco.com.au/technologychoice.

Once an Application is submitted via the Technology Choice online forms available on nbn™ website, nbn will perform an eligibility check and then if an application is accepted by nbn, the applicant is contacted to discuss the viability of the Area Switch and explain the process. The applicant then must pay an Application Fee in order for the application to progress to the next step. (Refer to Appendix A.2 Summary of Fees).

Following payment of the Application Fee, nbn conducts a Feasibility Assessment, which includes preparation of a cost estimation that provides a range to design and build the infrastructure required for the Area Switch.
If the applicant wishes to proceed, nbn issues a Design and Quote Fee that must be paid in full in order for nbn to develop a Build Quote for an Area Switch. The Design and Quote Fee will vary depending on the size of the Area Switch and the amount of work required to develop a Build Quote. (Refer to Appendix A.2 Summary of Fees).

Following payment of the Design and Quote fee, nbn engages contractors to develop a detailed design, conduct a site walkout, confirm availability of third party infrastructure and provide the Build Quote. As the size of an Area Switch can vary significantly, so can the amount of work required at this stage.

The Build Quote contains the costs associated with construction of the Area Switch, as well as:

- A Payment Schedule
- An indicative timeframe
- Contract with terms and conditions
The application process for an Area Switch is illustrated below.

1. **Submit application**
   - Via website online form

2. **Eligibility**
   - Acknowledge, initial assessment and advise eligibility and issue application fee invoice

3. **Application fee**
   - If eligible, pay application fee as per invoice to receive a cost estimation range

4. **Provide Cost Estimation and Design & Quote Fee**

5. **Pay Design & Quote Fee**

6. **Build Quote**
   - Create and issue Build Quote with contracts

7. **Build Payments**
   - Accept the build quote by signing the contract and paying partial or full quote amount (as indicated on quote)

8. **Make installment payments**
   - (if applicable)

9. **Construction Commencement**

10. **Complete all outstanding payments (if any)**

11. **Construction completion**

12. **Make premises ready for service**

13. **Call Retail Service Provider (RSP) for internet broadband service connection**

14. **Rejected**

15. **Applicant does not wish to proceed**

16. **End**
2.7 Fees Structure

The fee structure is designed so that applicants are informed about the likely costs of installing an Area Switch without having to commit upfront to a large Design and Quote fee.

Applicants are able to withdraw their application prior to acceptance of the Build Quote, and only have to pay fees for work already completed.

As these activities are in addition to nbn’s planned rollout schedule, and the applicant is not obligated to accept the quote, nbn must recover the costs associated with developing the quote.

2.8 Credit Assessment

Applicants are able to pay the financial contribution set out in the Build Quote in instalments or in full.

If an applicant wishes to pay its financial contribution under the Build Quote in instalments, nbn may require a credit assessment, with the applicant’s consent. nbn first requests the Applicant’s written consent to obtain a credit assessment, as required by law. nbn reserves the right (in its absolute discretion) to refuse an application or require full payment for an Area Switch before commencing work based on the results of a credit assessment.

If an Applicant does not wish to participate in a credit assessment, Applicant must make full payment for the Area Switch before work commences.

Government bodies are excluded from the credit assessment process.
3 ‘Individual Premises Switch’ Option

3.1 Overview

Individual Premises Switch refers to the option to switch eligible individual premises to an alternative nbn technology. An application will be a request for FTTP from an individual that falls within nbn’s service areas, e.g. a single residential property in a street, a business park, a school, a farm, a government building etc.

Applicants must have an active service on the existing network before submitting an application. Applications are only processed once the original technology for your area has been deployed. Check your address to find out if the nbn™ network is available at your home or business. Applications for an Individual Premises Switch from nbn’s service areas covered by Satellite, Fixed Wireless, FTTN or FTTB to FTTP may be submitted by individuals.

nbn quote for an Individual Premises Switch only covers the cost of design and installation of network infrastructure. Once the individual premises connection has been built, tested and activated to support services, end users may then order services from a Retail Service Provider (RSP). Information about how to order a service from a RSP over the nbn can be found at: www.nbnco.com.au/getting-connected.

Further investigation and consultation is also required in relation to the potential option of HFC to FTTP individual premises switch or other upgrade paths.

nbn is not able to provide advice to applicants, and makes no representation, about the advisability of an Individual Premises Switch in relation to any specific premises. It is important that applicants determine whether an alternate technology is advisable in their particular circumstances.

3.2 Eligible Applicants

Applicants can be individuals, businesses, incorporated associations, local government authorities and state or territory government organisations.

Applications for an Individual Premises Switch from satellite or fixed wireless to FTTP may be submitted by individuals or groups only where the fixed line network adjacent to the individual premises has been deployed.

Applications for a single premises covered by the FTTN or FTTB rollout may only be processed once the originally planned network has been deployed to the premises.

3.3 Applications by Retail Service Providers on behalf of eligible applicants

nbn offers the ability for Retail Service Providers (RSPs) to apply on behalf of their end user customers to facilitate an Individual Premises Switch. Such applications will proceed between nbn and the relevant RSP (and not directly with the applicant).

All other policy principles apply, the difference being that nbn will work with the RSP to assess eligibility and will contract with the RSP to provide the service. The commercial agreement between the RSP and the end-user is a matter between those parties. End-users will need to speak to their RSP about the progress of their application.
3.4 nbn Considerations with Individual Premises Switches

On receipt of an Individual Premises Switch Application, nbn considers, at a minimum, the following:

1. **Network rollout - Individual Premises Switches:**
   - Are only provided for locations whose applicants are purchasing an alternative technology than they have received as part of nbn’s network rollout
   - Cannot be used to bring forward the proposed installation schedule

2. **Deployment of original network - applications are only processed:**
   - Once the originally planned network has been deployed to the premises and a service has been activated on that network
   - If premises planned to receive Fixed Wireless or Satellite network and is adjacent to an already built FTTN or FTTP area.

3. **Extent to which Individual Premises Switch can be performed within nbn existing design and construction regime**

4. **Ability to accommodate timeframes** regarding the availability of third party infrastructure which nbn may use, and its relative cost

5. **Timing** of the application

6. **Proximity** to already constructed nbn infrastructure

For reference, nbn’s rollout plan is available at: www.nbnco.com.au/check-your-address.

nbn reserves the right to accept applications that may not meet all the above criteria, for example for public interest premises.
3.5 Technology Options with Individual Premises Switches

The following Technology Choice options are available for the Individual Premises Switch option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original nbn™ technology offering</th>
<th>New nbn™ technology offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Wireless</td>
<td>FTN</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTTN</td>
<td>FTTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTTB</td>
<td>FTTP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- ✔ Available now
- ❔ Under Development
- N/A = Not applicable

As the nbn rollout continues, further offerings may become available.

3.6 Determining Financial Contributions

nbn determines what financial contributions are required to pay for an Individual Premises Switch. Following the receipt of the application and subject to certain requirements, feasibility and availability limitations nbn provides an Individual Premises Switch Build Quote that outlines the payment structure for financial contribution required by the Applicant.

Applicants are required to make financial contributions for the design and construction of an Individual Premises Switch. nbn determines the financial contributions based on the relevant project management, design and construction costs. These costs include the building of telecommunications infrastructure and may include acquiring access to third party infrastructure, among other matters.

nbn determines the Individual Premises Switch Build Quote, based on the following:

- Location of each property, taking into account geography and distance from existing nbn infrastructure
- Cheapest route option within nbn's architectural constraints
- Time and cost to build the infrastructure required for the switch
- Costs of using third party infrastructure
3.7 Application Process for an Individual Premises Switch

Interested parties submit an application for an Individual Premises Switch by completing an Individual Premises Switch online Application Form on the Technology Choice section of nbn website at www.nbnco.com.au/technologychoice

If an application is accepted as eligible by nbn, the applicant is contacted by nbn to discuss the viability of the Individual Premises Switch and explain the process. The applicant must pay the Build Quote fee and accept the terms and conditions in order for the application to progress. (Refer to Appendix A.2 Summary of Fees).

Following payment of the Build Quote fee, nbn conducts an assessment of the network requirements. Once assessed, nbn will provide a fixed quote to design and build the infrastructure required for the Individual Premises Switch.

The Build Quote contains the costs associated with the design and construction of the Individual Premises Switch, as well as:

- A Payment Schedule
- An indicative timeframe
- Individual Premises Switch contract
The application process for an Individual Premises Switch is illustrated below.

1. **Submit application**
   (via website online form)

2. **Eligibility**
   Acknowledge, initial assessment and advise eligibility and issue Build Quote fee

3. **Rejected**

4. **Pay Build Quote Fee**

5. **Build Quote**
   Create and issue Build Quote with contracts

6. **Build Payments**
   Accept the build quote by signing the contract and paying partial or full quote amount (as indicated on quote)

7. **Make installment payments**
   (if applicable)

8. **Construction Commencement**

9. **Complete all outstanding payments (if any)**

10. **Construction completion**

11. **Make premises ready for service**

12. **Call Retail Service Provider (RSP) for internet broadband service connection**

13. **End**

14. **Applicant does not wish to proceed**
3.8 Fees Structure

The fee structure is designed so that applicants are able to understand the likely costs of completing an Individual Premises Switch before committing to the build of infrastructure.

Applicants are able to withdraw their application at any stage of the process, up to acceptance of the Build Quote, and are only liable for fees paid up to that stage.

Once the Applicant accepts the Build Quote by either signing the contract and paying the Build Quote, they are responsible for paying the financial contribution as per the contract which is issued along with Build Quote, even if they no longer own or reside at the relevant property (e.g. Applicant sells the property to the new owner). It is expected that the Applicant and property owner make their own financial contribution arrangements towards the outstanding payments.

3.9 Credit Assessment

nbn will determine at its discretion if the full amount must be paid upfront or if the Build Quote can be paid in instalments. For applications where nbn has agreed to payment by instalments, nbn may require a credit assessment. nbn will first request the Applicant’s written consent to obtain a credit assessment, as required by law. Based on the results of the credit assessment, nbn reserves the right (in its absolute discretion) to refuse an application or require full payment of an Individual Premises Switch before commencing work.

If an Applicant does not wish to participate in a credit assessment, they must make full payment for an Individual Premises Switch before work commences.
Appendices

A.1 Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name of Technology</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name of Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fibre</td>
<td>Fibre to the Premises</td>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Fixed Wireless</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTTB</td>
<td>Fibre to the Building</td>
<td>HFC</td>
<td>Hybrid Fibre Coaxial</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTTN</td>
<td>Fibre to the Node</td>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>Retail Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTTP</td>
<td>Fibre to the Premises</td>
<td>MDU</td>
<td>Multi-Dwelling Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDA</td>
<td>Fibre Distribution Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.2 Summary of Fees

Once an application is submitted it will be assessed under Technology Choice for eligibility based on information provided on the application forms, the rollout plan and against the eligibility criteria mentioned in the policy and this website. Once eligible, applicants pay an application fee in order to proceed to the next steps involving a detailed feasibility study determine an estimated range for the cost of the build. In certain circumstances nbn reserves the right to waive the application and design fees at its discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Area Switch</th>
<th>Individual Premises Switch</th>
<th>What does this provide?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee (if eligible)</td>
<td>$1100 (Incl GST) per FDA*</td>
<td>$660 (Incl GST)</td>
<td>Cost Estimation – This consists of the cost estimation range of the build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Quote</td>
<td>Upon application</td>
<td>$660 (Incl GST)</td>
<td>Build Quote – This consists of the incremental cost to build (such as design, construction and project management), as well as the contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Payments</td>
<td>As per Build Quote</td>
<td>As per Build Quote</td>
<td>Construction of the network as per Build Quote</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>