



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Corio Electorate: National Broadband Network**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 12 August 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Marles, Richard, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

**Mr MARLES** (Corio) (10:05): A couple of weeks ago the Minister for Communications visited my electorate of Corio to spruik the government's second-rate broadband network. The minister came to Geelong with much fanfare, using as his mode of transport one of the largest rail infrastructure projects in Australia's history, the Regional Rail Link, which was made possible by the former Labor government. But while that project actually happened, when it comes to the NBN the minister has been found wanting. The minister promised during the 2013 election that all premises would have access to download speeds of 25 to 100 megabits per second by the end of 2016. But is this happening? Certainly not in my electorate, even though, as the minister has discovered, we now have some very impressive rail timetables.

Under Labor, NBN Co had begun work on the fibre network in Geelong. In June 2013, work began to bring fibre broadband to about 2,400 homes and businesses. Work was scheduled to deliver fibre to about 44,000 homes and businesses in Greater Geelong, from Lovely Banks to St Leonards, from Clifton Springs to Corio. But despite promising to honour all contracts prior to the election, in government Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull cancelled the entire fibre rollout to Corio. Nearly two years into their term, the coalition has only just started rolling out their second-rate network on the Bellarine Peninsula. Despite promising to deliver the NBN to all homes by 2016, the coalition has not added a single existing home in Geelong to their 18-month rollout schedule.

This stands in stark contrast to our neighbour, Ballarat, which had the NBN rolled out prior to the 2013 election. Their good fortune in being at the head of the queue in Labor's rollout of the NBN has placed Ballarat firmly in the 21st century, while Geelong loses ground.

For regional Australia the NBN offered the prospect that businesses could now operate in cities like Geelong and Ballarat, when previously the only option was Melbourne. In regional Australia we could aspire to have our share of the economic activity which had previously been possible only in our capitals.

**Ms Henderson interjecting—**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite.

**Mr MARLES:** This exciting future is now Ballarat's present, while Geelong is increasingly left behind in the digital past.

**Ms Henderson interjecting—**

**Mr MARLES:** The truth is that when it comes to the NBN, as with so much else, the Prime Minister, the minister and indeed the member for Corangamite have abandoned Geelong.

This week marks the six-month anniversary of the Prime Minister's infamous statement that 'good government starts today'. The people of Geelong and most people in Corio still do not know when they will get the NBN as part of that good government, or the type of NBN they will get. Geelong must not be left behind when it comes to rolling out the NBN.

**Ms Henderson interjecting—**

An honourable member: A point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member for Corangamite will have an opportunity to respond in a moment. It is a three-minute constituency statement. There is not much time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you are wasting your colleague's time.

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It does not do that in this chamber. Please, the member for Corio has the call.

**Mr MARLES:** I am nearly finished, Madam Deputy Speaker. So the next time the minister is in my electorate, I would ask him to accompany me to the suburbs and streets around my electorate that do not have the NBN or even broadband connections. I would ask him to come with me to the schools where the kids are being left behind. I would ask him to talk to the businesses which are now considering relocating because of the appalling state of Geelong's broadband infrastructure. As I said in this place in May, the government needs to make good on its promise to the Australian people and remedy the situation immediately, and there is no better place to start making good on that— *(Time expired)*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I give the call to the member for Hindmarsh, Member for Greenway, I am sorry that I pointed out that your voice was carrying. I would like us to have respect for each other and to listen to each other in silence, please. Your voices do carry. I would like the rest of this session to be respectful and for us to hear each other in silence, please.