



Walter Taylor South Action Group Inc.

Protecting the Streetscapes

<http://wtsag.org.au>

Is NBN Rollout bringing problems to our suburb?

In the last 2 weeks residents would have started receiving letters from Visionstream regarding the upcoming NBN rollout in our area from July-November 2018.

The NBN rollout uses different types of technology for different areas, and each of these technologies has differing performance and futureproof capabilities.

Unfortunately for our areas, NBN has decided that the troublesome HFC technology is to be used for our suburbs. Please let your neighbours know about this impending change that will impact both your phone and internet services.

Just for some background, the technologies that are being used by NBN in order of best to worst reputation are listed below:

1. [Fibre to the Premises \(FTTP\)](#) - the best class 1 standard for now and the future, no sharing
2. [Fibre to the Basement \(FTTB\)](#) - good for units and townhouses and the future, limited sharing
3. [Fibre to the Kerb \(FTTC\)](#) - good for individual houses and the future, limited sharing
4. [Hybrid Fibre Coaxial \(HFC\)](#) - fast to rollout on existing infrastructure, shared 500 houses
5. [Fibre to the Node \(FTTN\)](#) - a little bit better than older ADSL infrastructure
6. [NBN Wireless](#) - if no wired solutions are available, and you are near a communications tower, shared and distance dependent
7. [NBN Satellite](#) - For really remote areas

HFC History

For the last 12 months, NBN had halted rollout of HFC services because of technical problems. The history of mistakes around HFC is an area of concern for the planned NBN rollout. NBN purchased the old HFC cable networks from both Optus and Telstra who rollout out these networks during the 1990s.

If you recall both Optus and Telstra were racing to bring cable TV's to residents of Australia and because this was a timeliness issue, both rolled out their infrastructure as quickly as possible (preferencing timeliness over quality).

When NBN started researching the capabilities of their new purchase, they discovered that the Optus network was below standard, so they then had to write-off that investment. That meant that in order to avoid embarrassment, they needed to ensure that the remaining Telstra HFC network

would be rolled out. Unfortunately they tried to do this without checking the quality, and what they found was that because HFC is shared between all connected houses, small faults in wiring in each connection would lead to disruption to connection for all connected houses. The result was that part-way through the rollout, NBN had to stop because of the alarming number of faults. The result was a review that replaced some areas of HFC with FTTC and an upgrade to HFC networks (even after the option was given to the government to replace all HFC with FTTC).

Although HFC is used in other countries to provide access, these other countries have a single provider for those services. In Australia however the NBN must sell those services to providing companies who will share access to this service - this is a unique in the world. Consequently, should you have problems with HFC connectivity, you're actually part of a shared network with multiple parties involved in sorting out technical issues on a network which is dependent on the quality of fittings on the other 500 odd houses that are commonly connected. This is a recipe for "unexplainable" technical issues and will present real problems in solving likely traffic congestion issues during peak periods (typically night time).

What's planned by NBN to connect HFC in next 6 Months?

Each house will be connected to the HFC cable - contractors have the automatic right to enter your property to connect to your house and install a connection box. The NBN will not be available until after this period, however once the area is declared NBN ready you will have 18 months and you must take action to transfer your telephone and internet services if you wish to remain connected. Staying on your existing service will NOT be an option.

So what can you do?

Consider contacting the NBN to stop connection of HFC to your house if you do not want the HFC cable connected to your house. This will help avoid unnecessary cost to the government, help improve the visual amenity of our area with less aerial cables, and give possums less of an opportunity to get onto your roof.

The NBN allows you to request a quotation from them to upgrade to better technologies. Unfortunately, this costs money, but instead of doing this individually you can get a group of residents nearby to make a group request, not only sharing the application cost, but also sharing the costs of any actual upgrades should you decide to proceed. There is one small problem here - NBN Co. has still not announced how to apply for the HFC to FTTC upgrade as their website is still showing "Under Development" and also you cannot actually apply for an alternative technology until after the HFC cable connections have been rolled out!!

So what to do, in priority order:

1. Talk to your neighbours and share this information. [Print out and distribute the attached flyer.](#)
2. Ask nearby residents if they are willing to [apply for upgraded services via NBN application](#)
3. [Click here to email your federal government representative asking how to apply for an NBN upgrade and avoid government financial waste.](#)
4. Come to our website and use your website comments to link up with other residents to aggregate requests (save everyone money). Try and avoid individual applications as these are likely to be prohibitively expensive.