



# MEDIA RELEASE

## SENATOR THE HON NICK MINCHIN

Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications  
and the Digital Economy

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Thursday, 9 April 2009

### **RUDD MUST PROVE NBN EXPERT PANEL ADVISED LABOR TO SPEND \$43 BILLION ON FIBRE TO THE PREMISE PLAN**

Kevin Rudd must prove his claims that the NBN expert panel advised the Government to pursue a \$43 billion fibre to the premise network, given there is nothing in the public domain to confirm, that in fact, the panel provided this advice.

On ABC television's *7.30 Report* on 7 April, Mr Rudd said the expert panel advised that none of the bids represented value for money. *"And as a consequence, the panel's advice to us was to go to the next stage and then to invest instead in fibre optic to the home, the business or the premises."*

"If this was the clear advice of the expert panel, which includes Treasury Secretary Dr Ken Henry, surely that would have been released by Labor in its three page extract of the panel's evaluation report," Senator Minchin said.

"If as Mr Rudd says, that this advice was the basis of this latest announcement, the Government should, at the very least, publish the section of the expert panel report that contains that advice.

"The extract published by the Government makes only fleeting reference to fibre to the premise by simply noting that fibre to the node was *"unlikely to provide an efficient upgrade path to fibre to the premises"*.

"The Coalition has repeatedly called on the Government to release the full report of the expert panel to prove to the Australian public that it has in fact followed the panel's advice," Senator Minchin said.

"In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it would seem Mr Rudd has cooked up this grandiose and seemingly unviable scheme at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to mask the embarrassment of the collapse of Senator Conroy's NBN tender.

"Kevin Rudd must release the expert panel's report in full, as well as the report of the ACCC to prove Labor has in fact followed the advice and hasn't just dreamt up a new scheme on the run to deflect from the undeniable fact that Labor has broken its key election promise.

"Labor's refusal to release these reports despite an order from the Senate to do so suggests Kevin Rudd and Senator Conroy definitely have things to hide," Senator Minchin said.

**Further information:** Cameron Hill on 0408 239 521.

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