

# NBN project racks up critics

BY EDDIE MORTON

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THE federal government's \$37 billion National Broadband Network is being criticised by technicians in the telecommunications industry.

A Telstra employee, who works in the Stonnington area and wished to remain nameless said the "average household" did not need the 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download speeds the project promised.

"In all honesty, you are not going to lose that much speed going to the node and the normal everyday fam-

ily doesn't need that much speed," the Telstra employee said.

The Telstra employee, part of the company charged with managing the new hyper-fast network, said the plan had been undervalued.

"I dare say it will go well beyond the government's estimated budget and timeframe."

The NBN Co has named Kooyong and Glen Iris among the next roll out of suburbs to get hooked up to the optic-fibre network within the next three years.

Armadale, Toorak and Malvern have also been earmarked for the

upgrades by 2017 while work in neighbouring suburb Caulfield will begin in 2014.

According to NBN Co spokesperson Rhonda Griffin, the rollout sequence depended on where work had already begun and the use of Telstra exchanges.

The Telstra employee told *RL* that contractors had already received training, but were yet to be officially told of the rollout.

"It is going to be a lot of work for us especially considering we will be cutting over every residence at this stage and each job represents a few

hours' work. So you can get an idea of the sheer size of this project."

He said the current copper network work in Kooyong and Glen Iris "was old", but had recently been upgraded.

Shadow communications minister Malcolm Turnbull shared the technician's views, criticising communications minister Steven Conroy for setting an unachievable target.

"Stephen Conroy originally said he would have passed 1.3 million households by June 30 this year but will be unlikely to reach 15 per cent of that target," Mr Turnbull said.

## Sweet success

THE male-dominated brewing industry does not faze Ruth Gallace.

The 31-year-old has proved her prowess, and has been named a Women in Business finalist in the 2013 Australian Excellence Awards.

"The awards shelf is definitely filling up," said the winner of several prizes including a double gold medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition.

"Aside from the women that work in our company, I could probably count on one hand how many other women I have met working in the cider industry."

Mrs Gallace runs the boutique fruit winery and cider house Rebello Wines on the Mornington Peninsula with her husband, Matt.

The business has gone from strength to strength in the past eight years.

Two years ago the pair launched Australia's first locally made 100 per cent fruit-blended cider - Cheeky Rascal.

Mrs Gallace said launching a recognisable brand in the alcohol industry was "borderline impossible".

"Other bigger cider brands would have marketing budgets bigger than our company's entire yearly turnover," she said.

For women aspiring to be the next red-hot entrepreneur, the mother of two said courage was the key. "But don't think for a second it's going to be smooth sailing," she said. "Be realistic and don't do everything at the same time."

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CIDER RULES: Ruth Gallace has been named a Women in Business finalist