



5 March 2009

The Committee Manager
Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir

**SUBMISSION: TRANSFORMING LIFE OUTSIDE CITIES:
THE POTENTIAL OF BROADBAND SERVICES (Inquiry)**

Satyananda Yoga Academy (SYA) would like to submit a response to the Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities.

SYA will endeavour to respond to the benefits and opportunities for rural and regional communities of having access to telecommunications (including broadband) and other technology services.

(a) Improving government services and efficiency in service delivery, including in the areas of education, health and justice services.

Satyananda Yoga Academy is a registered training organisation located 55kms as the crow flies, (or 84kms by road) from the Sydney CBD. SYA is the largest and longest established yoga training institute in the Southern Hemisphere. It shares the property here with Yoga Association of Mangrove Mountain which offers weekend and weeklong yoga retreats. Between these 2 organisations they have:

- ❑ Over 5000 visits (many of whom have travelled from overseas) and an overall client base of 25,000;
- ❑ 40 students graduating each year with an Internationally recognised Diploma, which is approved by VETAB;
- ❑ A Vocational Graduate Diploma under development, for training yoga teachers in using yoga for special needs including specific health conditions;
- ❑ 7 fulltime staff;
- ❑ 35 part time staff, and;
- ❑ Numerous volunteer workers

It is a growing business, which is being stymied by poor Internet and telephone communication.

SYA has satellite Internet, which is woeful. It is expensive, slow, and in cloudy weather, rain or drizzle the Internet service becomes unusable.

SYA trains students to become yoga teachers who enter the workforce to teach the community techniques on breathing, meditation, relaxation and good exercise, as well as natural health

methods. As a result, the community benefits from yoga classes by improving their wellbeing and not becoming a burden on the public purse by seeking help from health practitioners.

All communication to and from the students is conducted through the Internet. With an improved system, this would facilitate advancing the online teaching facilities.

SYA currently has a division in Rocklyn (Victoria) but due to the poor Internet service the teachers can only communicate via email rather than using online methods.

SYA currently has a fledgling research department which supports several people writing PhDs around the benefits of yoga for health and wellbeing. This department has been particularly hampered in its development due to poor internet access and some people have been forced to move elsewhere due to this problem.

Therefore, we urge the Federal and State Governments to deliver an Internet service similar to what the major cities receive.

(b) Improving the level of engagement of rural and regional communities in public life through new technologies.

SYA, along with many other rural and regional companies urge the State Government of NSW to research and improve these areas. The Government must no longer be “Sydney centric”.

It is vital that new technologies be serviced in the rural and regional communities because the majority of income into the Federal and State Government’s coffers emanates from the country.

Many rural and regional communities are struggling because of the lack of resource and modern technologies.

SYA is no different from other regional small businesses when it comes to Internet speeds. As with other major and small business in the rural area, SYA is having all sorts of difficulties in getting connected to ADSL. The centre is 9.2 kms from the nearby CMUX and therefore unable to connect to Broadband because of the distance and the lack of ports in the exchange. Telstra has been most unhelpful in assisting SYA in obtaining a reasonable ADSL connection. Telstra offered wireless network, which was trailed on site, but simply does not work due to the terrain.

SYA has the potential to be actively engaged in a worldwide public network of yoga specialists and health workers and would contribute to a developing body of knowledge using the Internet.

Therefore, if the level of engagement of rural and regional communities in public life through new technologies, SYA would be at the forefront of education and health principles.

(c) Investigating the potential economic benefits from new technology on commercial and business opportunities in rural and regional communities.

SYA is a flourishing business that has a flow-on effect within the community by the:

- Increase of trained Yoga Teachers who will reduce poor health and increase an improved lifestyle for the community;
- The employment of staff living within the area;
- The purchasing of all produce from the area; and
- Increase of tourism in the area

An improved Internet service would increase productivity with a flow-on effect throughout the wider community.

The aim in achieving an acceptable Internet service so the students and visitors can continue to communicate with the outside world would increase the commercial and business opportunities within the companies to a higher level.

Therefore, SYA supports and would like to be actively involved in the government's investigation into the potential economic benefits from new technology on commercial and business opportunities in rural and regional communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hilary Oliver". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish underneath the name.

HILARY OLIVER
Administrative Assistant