



Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

RE: Key Issues For Further Investigation Discussion Paper

Dear Sir/Madam

On behalf of the Central Western Regional Development Board (CWRDB) I am writing in response to the request for comment on the above discussion paper.

The Central West region is 63,262 sq. km's with 12 local government areas and the geography ranges from mountains in the east to plains in the west. The region has a diverse industry base made up of mining, manufacturing, engineering, tourism, financial services, agriculture, viticulture and horticulture. Therefore has a need for a regional solution in broadband that is conducive to delivery over a diverse landscape and access quality to suit small to large multi-national businesses. The CWRDB see broadband as essential to the region's business growth and community wellbeing. It is hoped that a conclusion of the Standing Committee will be that broadband solutions for NSW need to consider regional solutions for regional areas. The Central West region needs to have a level of broadband service that is available to the entire region regardless of town size and location that provides a standard of equitable service and pricing to metropolitan areas.

Strategies for addressing the lack of availability of services in certain areas including the choice of technology:

- The strengthening of the Universal Service Obligation (USO);
- State Government to lobby the Federal Government in support of regional areas with no access to broadband and choice of technologies.

The appropriate role for State government in promoting and increasing the use of broadband;

- The CWRDB would consider it useful for regional areas to have an independent unbiased broker that can reliably inform businesses and individuals on the most appropriate broadband access for their location and give an indicative price they may expect to pay. This would greatly help in alleviating the current level of confusion and difficulty in knowing what access is available, choosing a provider and broadband package.

- The regional market demand is driving the use of broadband already. The main issue being that demand exceeds the ability to access broadband.

State and local government planning in delivery of broadband services in particular areas;

- Engage in broad community consultation.

The importance of broadband services for education, health and business activities and to retain regional and rural population levels; and

- The CWRDB see these as being critically important to the sustainability, growth and well being of regional areas.

The actual level of service required in the future to maximize the benefits to these communities;

- Consideration and review of the regulatory environment to ensure regional areas maintain a standard of equitable pricing and access to metropolitan areas.
- The delivery of technologies currently that will allow NSW to maintain international standards now and in the future.
- The role out of technology that delivers on bandwidth, has reliable infrastructure that can be easily upgraded to engage new technologies and cost effective for businesses and individuals.

The CWRDB submit these comments for your consideration. If you require any discussion on these issues please do not hesitate to contact the CWRDB on 02 63608400 or email Sharon@centralwest.com.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Rabey

Executive Officer

Central Western Regional Development Board Inc.

2nd May 2007