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Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network  
Department of the Senate

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Dear Committee Secretary

### **National Broadband Network Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN). This submission responds to 2b of the terms of reference on *“utilisation of the national broadband network in connected localities in both metropolitan and regional areas, and the identification of opportunities enhance economic and social benefits”*.

The State Library of Queensland (SLQ) is a vibrant and innovative 21st century library – a place for sharing, learning and creating, both in the cultural precinct and through our ever expanding online offer. SLQ builds the collection of Queensland documentary’s culture and heritage, provides free access to print, digital and original resources, information and research services and public programs. In partnership with Local Government, SLQ supports over 330 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres statewide.

SLQ and Queensland public libraries are a thriving statewide network enabling greater access for all in our community and actively collaborating with the wider community to ensure literacy and capability is developed across all regions of Queensland. Public libraries play an essential role in providing access to the internet, local and global online content, and digital literacy skills development.

Many libraries in rural and remote parts of Queensland do not have access to fast, effective and consistent connection to the internet impacting on their ability to support their community’s digital access. These libraries are hubs for community internet access and serve populations that often have limited or no home connectivity, less alternative access options and high needs. This lack of connectivity currently constrains economic and social development in these rural and remote communities.

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) measures three vital dimensions of digital inclusion – Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. Libraries play a vital role supporting local communities with free access and opportunities to build capacity and ability. The lack of reliable high speed connectivity limits opportunities for Queenslanders in regional and remote areas. The 2016 report states that North West Queensland is amongst the

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least digitally included areas in Australia. Of particular concern is that for Indigenous Queenslanders the digital inclusion gap has widened, with decreasing scores over three years.

Prioritising the NBN rollout to Queensland public libraries and remote and rural communities will enable economic development and create opportunities to improve digital inclusion and literacy in these communities.

Yours sincerely

Professor Andrew Griffiths  
Chairperson  
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