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**GUNNING AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Inc**

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The Secretary,  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Inquiry into the National Broadband network

Dear Sir,

The Gunning and District Chamber of Commerce wishes to make a brief submission to the above inquiry. We propose to address three issues raised in the inquiry.

#### Background

Gunning is a town on the Hume Highway approximately 40 kilometers from Yass and Goulburn and about 80kms from Canberra. Gunning is also served by the Sydney/Melbourne railway. This nexus of transport links means that Gunning will continue to attract interest.

The Chamber understands that at this stage it is not proposed that Gunning will be part of the NBN. The Chamber also understands that one reason for not connecting Gunning is that its population is less than 1000. This we find arbitrary and indeed does not take into consideration the surrounding district.

#### 1. Achieving health outcomes

Gunning has an active health service providing a range of health related services. A visiting doctor holds clinics. We have an older cohort of population as well as an increasing number of families with young children.

As technology progresses, real time consultation for diagnosis and prescription will become more common. For this to be achieved effectively and efficiently, rapid internet access would be required. Without this, improvements in Gunning's health service may not be possible and may in fact decline, thus denying the real health needs of the community.

#### 2. Regional economic growth and employment opportunities

Economic activity in Gunning initially suffered after the Hume Highway was diverted around Gunning. In recent years activity has increased with new businesses and a growth in population. By providing an internet service equivalent to that available in larger centres would be an added attraction for new residents and businesses and a boost to those already here.

Encouraging some population growth in regional areas will reduce population pressures in larger centres and is an aim supported by both state and federal governments.

3. Impact on businesses, especially small and medium sized.

Many businesses are reliant on the internet and increasingly higher speeds and larger data transmissions are demanded. This applies to town businesses and surrounding farms with graziers increasingly needing to access market information from overseas.

There is a growing interest in home based businesses locating in Gunning, and high speed internet is again demanded.

Conclusion

The Chamber is concerned that by denying smaller communities such as Gunning access to the internet at a quality equivalent to larger centers will stymie expected and needed growth. It will deny us access to the technology that the vast majority of Australians will enjoy.

Yours faithfully

Douglas Darbyshire  
Secretary/Treasurer