



Chair's Foreword

This month's announcements by Australia's two largest media outlets, Fairfax Media and News Limited, on the rapid ascent of their digital platforms, are important examples of how important the new wholesale broadband platform will be for Australia. This week's announcement by the National Library of Australia of its embrace of a greater digital platform is the latest example.

The National Broadband Network (NBN), over the coming decade, will deeply impact each and every one of us, either through the way we receive our news and information, the way we do business and communicate with clients and customers, or the way we manage our health and education.

Building anything other than the best wholesale platform is not acceptable. The speed and capacity of a 'gold standard' platform offers significant and obvious quantitative and qualitative benefits for consumers when compared to a 'copper-standard' platform. With an end sale also written into legislation, this asset is ultimately being built to be sold – so the better the build, the better the return to taxpayers.

The Joint Committee on the NBN assesses a range of issues in this Third Report that are relevant to this pursuit of the best possible build. Included in this report is consideration of an eight month delay, workforce issues, and performance compared to the soon to be updated NBN Co Corporate Plan.

So despite several performance issues being identified, the focus remains on the quality of the broadband asset we will construct, initially own, and from which we will derive significant economic benefit. We seek high quality, and therefore high consumer benefit, from our broadband assets – assets that are becoming as fundamental to our lives as housing or transport.

This Third Report raises a range of issues that I urge the Government and NBN Co to respond to in detail and in depth.

I thank all Committee Members for their commitment to this process in what is a hotly contested area of policy.

I particularly thank the Secretariat for their on-going work – they deserve credit for producing a quality Third Report.

Robert Oakeshott MP
Chair