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Introduction

Referral and conduct of the Inquiry

1.1   The Inquiry into the role of Smart ICT in the design and planning of Infrastructure (the Inquiry), was referred to the former House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications on 25 May 2015. The Inquiry was referred by the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, The Hon Warren Truss MP.

1.2   The Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications ceased by resolution of the House on 13 October 2015. The Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities (the Committee) adopted the Inquiry on 11 November 2015.

1.3   Immediately after referral, details of the Inquiry were made available on the Parliament of Australia's website calling for written submissions. The Inquiry was also promoted through an extensive mail out to interested parties, including peak bodies and organisations, and the relevant government departments.

1.4   Over the course of the Inquiry, the Committee received 49 submissions from organisations, government authorities and individuals. A list of submissions is at Appendix A. A range of publications, documents and supplementary material received during the Inquiry was received as exhibits. A list of exhibits is at Appendix B.

1.5   In addition, the Committee undertook an extensive program of public hearings. Between August 2015 and December 2015 the Inquiry held 8 public hearings, including one interstate public hearing. Details of the public hearings, including a list of witnesses, are at Appendix C.

Scope of the Inquiry

1.6   This inquiry was originally conceived as a limited investigation of new technologies relating to the development of infrastructure. The response from government and industry, however, has seen the inquiry grow into a broader examination of the development of smart infrastructure using new technologies and systems, and possible responses by government.

Structure of the report

1.7   Chapter 2 defines the key new technologies being applied to infrastructure and examines the opportunities and productivity benefits these technologies raise for urban and regional areas, utilities, and transport networks.

1.8   Chapter 3 examines the questions surrounding data collection and harmonisation, including:

- the importance of data to the development of smart infrastructure;
- the need for access to data and the value of open data;
- achieving compatibility and interoperability between different data, devices and systems;
- the role of national and international standards in achieving the harmonisation of data and processes;
- data collection and storage capabilities; and
- data security.

1.9   Chapter 4 investigates the role of smart ICT in emergency management and disaster planning and remediation.

1.10   Chapter 5 focusses on the actions government and industry can take to promote the uptake of smart ICT in the development of infrastructure.