

CCIQ SUBMISSION

Inquiry into the rollout of the NBN in rural and regional areas

Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND

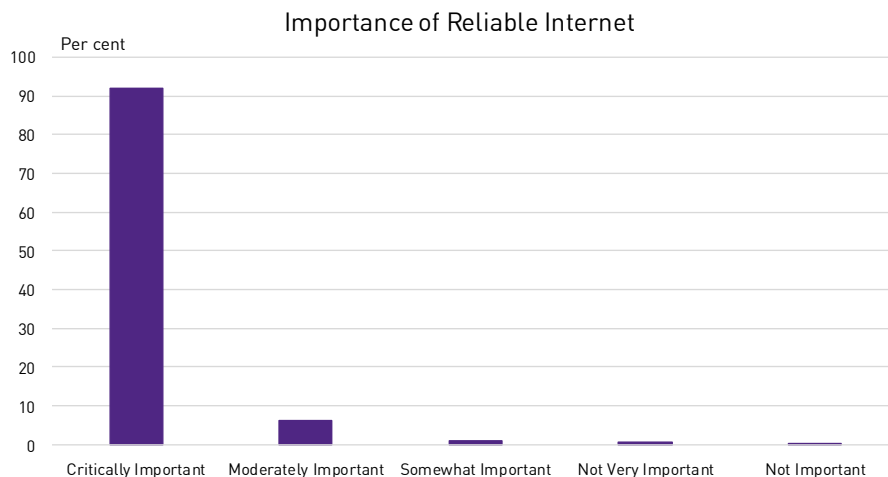
29 March 2018

Introduction

1. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network (the Committee) on the *Inquiry into the rollout of the NBN in rural and regional areas* (the Inquiry) as part of their review in relation to the terms of reference as outlined below:
 - a. planning, mapping and eligibility for satellite, fixed wireless and fixed line services;
 - b. adequacy of plans and service reliability of satellite, fixed wireless and fixed line services;
 - c. issues in relation to the future capacity of satellite, fixed wireless and fixed line services;
 - d. provision of service by alternative providers of satellite, fixed wireless and fixed line services; and
 - e. any other related matters.
2. CCIQ is Queensland's peak industry representative organisation for small and medium businesses. We represent over 426,000 Queensland businesses on local, state, and federal issues that matter to them. Our guiding focus is to develop and advocate policies that are in the best interests of Queensland businesses, the Queensland economy, and the Queensland community.

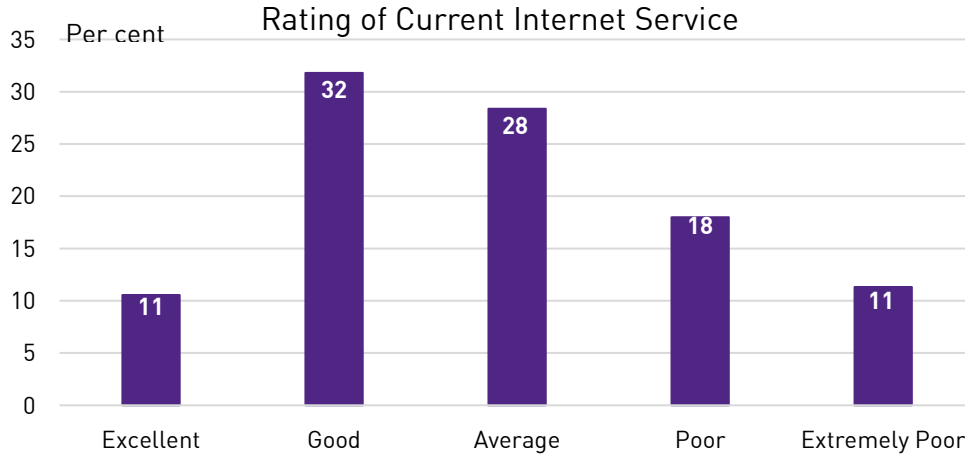
Current Service Levels

3. In January 2018, CCIQ conducted a survey regarding internet usage in business. 92 per cent of respondents consider the reliability of internet to be critically important to their enterprise. Therefore, it is imperative the NBN rollout be executed, efficiently, and without detriment to the small business community. Without reliable fast internet Queensland small businesses will be left in the 20th century. These results did not vary across the regions.

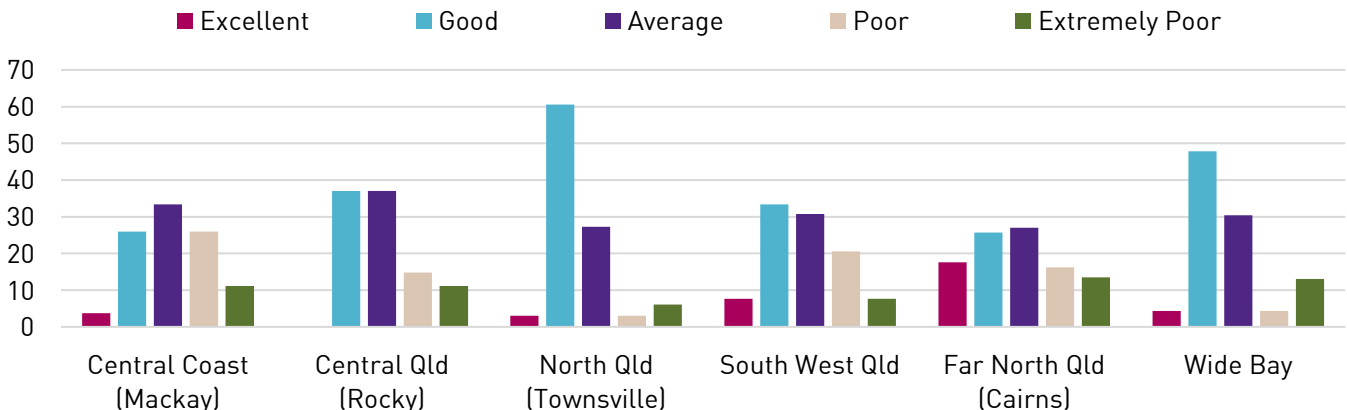
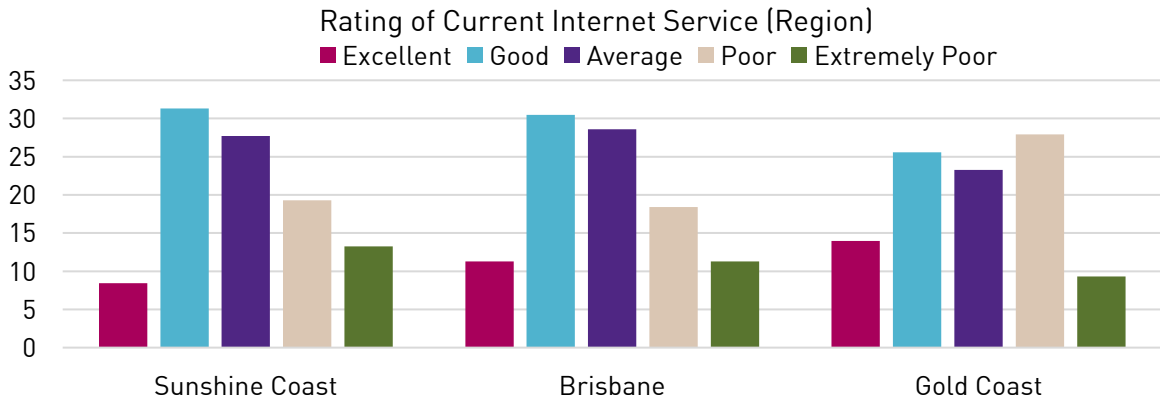




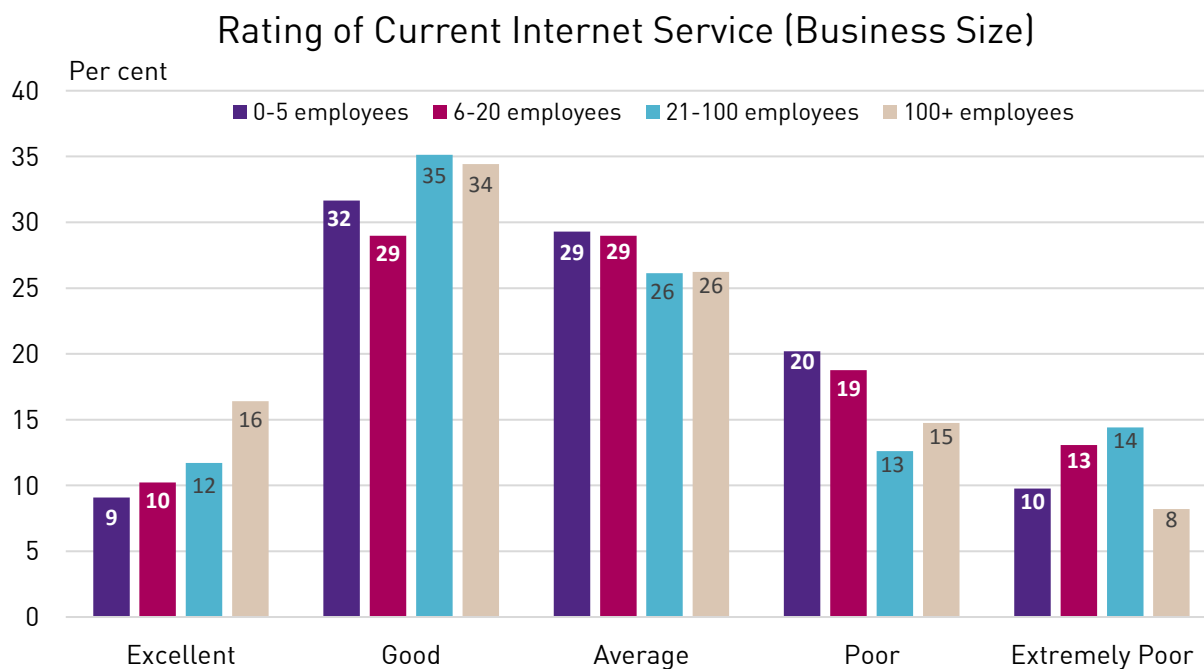
- Currently only 11 per cent of Queensland businesses would rank their internet as excellent. Alarmingly that is the same result as users who believe their service is extremely poor.



- Across the regions, the greater majority felt their current internet service reliability was 'good'. 61 per cent of businesses in Townsville consider their current service to be 'good', the highest in any region.



- Big business rates their service levels 5 per cent above the average (16 per cent) as excellent. Medium enterprises reported the highest level of satisfaction in terms of internet service.



- Across the whole of business spectrum, reliable internet services are imperative for a successful enterprise, regardless of location or size, and there is room for improvement to ensure Queensland small businesses remain competitive and have full access to the benefits of the NBN.

Regional Implementation

- To date, the regional roll out across Queensland would be considered adequate. Over 60 per cent of regional centres reported NBN was in their area. However, businesses in the Wide Bay region reported the lowest availability of access to NBN, with only 61 per cent reporting its availability in the region, and 35 per cent stating it was not available. Upon review of the Wide Bay roll out, significant areas in the region appear to have access, therefore CCIQ surmises there has been a communication breakdown between NBN, providers and consumers.
- It is important NBN ensure access is provided to where there are businesses. Wide Bay and Central Queensland both reported 4 per cent unsure whether NBN was in the region. Regional rollout must be coupled with effective advertising of the service to ensure 100 per cent take up of the service or of alternatives.

NBN Service Availability (Region)



10. Despite high levels of reported access to NBN services in regional Queensland, large portions of Queensland appear to be without access to the FTTP, FTTN, and Sky Muster (satellite). More alarming however is the lack of uptake of the NBN in areas where it is available.

Recommendations

11. Regional businesses have predominantly been provided with access under the NBN rollout plan however, CCIQ believes greater focus needs to be given to rural communities and businesses.
12. Reviewing anecdotal data and the quantitative data it is clear a communication breakdown has occurred between NBN and the consumer. Low levels of sentiment and distrust are exacerbated by continual negative media. NBN is encouraged to develop a communication strategy which connects with the regional and rural business community to ensure uptake of the service is increased.

Conclusion

13. With the ever-increasing presences of smart technologies, artificial intelligence, big data and global supply chains facilitated by the internet it is important our regional and rural communities are not left behind.
14. If there are any questions regarding this submission, please contact General Manager of Advocacy, Kate Whittle