

**BASS
COAST**

Submission to:
Parliament of Australia
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
New Inquiry into the National Broadband Network

“Examine the capacity of the National Broadband Network (NBN) to contribute to”

a) The delivery of government services and programs

- NBN will provide more effective delivery of government programs eg training programs for small business, smart forms for permits etc
- NBN will enable remote customer service, online payments of fees and charges and enable more participation in consultations through teleconferencing and online feedback capacity
- NBN will assist in servicing Bass Coast’s aging population provided sufficient training and assistance is available.

b) achieving health outcomes

- The Gippsland Health Alliance (public hospitals and community health services) use fibre optic connectivity for speed and ease of referral and transmission of client files. Agencies such as the Bass Coast Shire Council which need access to these files for intake and assessment purposes (in the Home and Community Care program specifically) would benefit greatly from the increased speed for transmission of data and the capacity of broadband.
- Sharing of digital resources between hospitals, specialists, medical centres (such as medical records, timetables, etc)
- eHealth/TeleHealth/TeleMedicine – better access to doctors/specialists/psychologists. Less need to travel for check-ups. Less risk of spreading illnesses with the possibility of doctor’s diagnosis from home and providing certificates.
- Home Care / SmartHome monitoring – extending independence for elderly, allowing them to remain in their home longer potentially reducing the load on hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

c) improving the educational resources and training available for teachers and students

- The proposed Bass Coast Education Precinct will rely heavily on broadband for virtual teaching opportunities. Currently there is no University operating in the municipality and the likelihood of a campus being developed is low.

However there is intense interest in the opportunities provided by virtual teaching. Both Telstra and Polycom have visited the site, looked at the proposal and commented that broadband will enhance the educational outcomes available to local students.

- Learning institutions will benefit with better access to shared digital resources. This will support lobbying for a university campus' to be opened in the area.
- Students will be able to access online courses, attend lectures remotely, etc. This allows many young people to remain in the area and will improve the local skill-sets. It also allows people to undertake further study remotely, fitting in with other activities.

d) the management of Australia's built and natural resources and environmental sustainability

- Important to ensure that agencies and processes involved in the planning are linked in order to increase efficiencies and planning outcomes. Real time consideration of planning applications will also reduce the burden imposed on agencies, developers and the community in processing planning applications.
- Digital monitoring of resource usage to minimise waste eg power in buildings
- Ability to communicate (two way and visual) long distances without travel reducing the carbon footprint and use of energy (fuel etc)
- Quicker times for downloads which should (in theory) reduce the time spent on a computer
- Improved ability to educate, store information and share data across a wide audience and a wide area
- Ability for people to work from home reducing the carbon footprint of a large office building and duplication of office space.

e) regional economic growth and employment opportunities

- NBN will provide opportunities for tele-commuting which will reduce the strain of traffic infrastructure with potential reduction in traffic incidents.
- NBN will make it more viable for holiday home owners to operate their businesses from remote locations. Some may choose to live permanently in the area if the option was available for work. This has the added benefit of easing the metropolitan housing strain as well as traffic congestion. This will also invigorate the local community as well as bringing in 'new' money into the regional economy.

- Career advancement. Networking, training and attending activities 'online'. Better access to resources online without travelling
- Employment opportunities created to support all of the above technologies.
- Opportunities for businesses to decentralise and relocate to regional areas thus increasing the spend and employment opportunities
- Increases the overall livability of the region; a delay in delivery of the NBN may adversely affect livability and reduce our capacity to attract new business.

f) business efficiencies and revenues, particularly for small and medium businesses, and Australia's export market

- NBN will facilitate online services including online sales – 24/7
- More efficient stock control/inventory management systems
- Group buying opportunities
- Transport and distribution systems
- Improved customer satisfaction

g) interaction with research and development and related innovation investments

- Increased access to world wide services and educational opportunities
- NBN will create the opportunity for creative partnerships – eg technology park
- R&D relationships could be established with companies anywhere in the world

h) facilitating community and social benefits

- Engagement in society today is increasingly over the internet with specialist software that enables comments, chat and exchanges of ideas from the community and others. The views of diverse groups can be expressed and viewed by others who can add to the comments thereby giving a deep understanding of the issues and views being expressed. This creates equal opportunity and emphasises the importance of an inclusive culture and of valuing difference between individuals and communities.
- Increased accessibility for disadvantage community members ie people with disabilities; transport issues; family obligations eg carers. NBN can reduce the feeling of isolation for members of the community, enabling communication with family and friends

- Neighbourhood houses in the municipality should be supported to provide additional computer training so that the community members can exploit the new technology.
- All public library outlets have public internet access which is heavily used. These facilities will be able to promote the use of high speed technology to the general members of the community and enable them to access and try it before committing to home connection.
- The local Veteran's Welfare Centre and the Grantville Transaction Centre are other access points for community members to deal with on line payments and services.
- By providing a range of online communities of similar interests
- NBN will enable CCTV which can be used by police to improve community safety

i) the optimal capacity and technological requirements of a network to deliver these outcomes

- NBN needs to offer the same service ie speed, reliability and cost, to remote users as is available to users in the metropolitan areas.
- NBN needs to be robust enough to withstand peak usage without compromising the above requirements

Bass Coast Shire Council supports the implementation of the National Broadband Network rollout as it believes it will have many benefits for our community, particularly those facing disadvantage. It is also essential that regions of greatest need are prioritized accordingly.

Peter Francis
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