



56 CHANTER STREET
P.O. BOX 137, BERRIGAN, NSW 2712
TELEPHONE: (03) 5888 5100 FACSIMILE: (03) 5885 2092
Email: mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au
www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au

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Submission No. 6

Chairman
Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Attention: Inquiry Secretary

Submitted by email: icnbn@aph.gov.au

The Berrigan Shire Council looks forward to the economic and social opportunities that will be delivered to country, regional and rural New South Wales through the roll out of the National Broadband Network.

The Shire Council also recognises that the provider NBNCo Limited has recently met with Local Government in New South Wales Murray River and Southern Riverina districts as part of its engagement with local communities on NBNCo's staged planning and delivery of the network.

The Berrigan Shire is situated in the Southern Riverina and it is predominantly irrigated rural land in nature, with its main pursuits being devoted to the agriculture and Murray River tourism. It is bound to the south by the Murray River. The council boundaries encompass the towns of Barooga, Berrigan, Finley and Tocumwal.

Our submission relates to NBNCo's plans to install

1. Fibre optic cable in three of the Shire's four communities – Barooga, Finley and Tocumwal
2. Fixed wireless in the township of Berrigan; and
3. Satellite coverage in the rural districts serviced by the townships of Finley and Berrigan.

The Shire is a relatively densely populated rural shire that is also socio-economically exposed and sensitive to the impact of:

- Outward migration to Victoria
- Climate change
- Closure of River Red Gum industry and the creation of national parks

- Murray Darling Basin Plan water reform agenda; an impact that is exacerbated by the Shire's
- Limited adaptive capacity other than through technology driven innovation supporting the retention of its human capital

The irony is that the proximity or the *oh so close but so far* ... installation of fibre optic cabling in three of our four towns and its installation in neighbouring Victorian towns of similar size will exacerbate the social and economic impact of 'government policy induced shocks', climate change and plans to reduce the economic output of our irrigated agriculture industries.

That a relatively compact Shire in area, three hours from Melbourne, and well serviced by a National Highway (Route 39 Newell Highway) and the Riverina Highway (National Route 58) is considered so remote by NBNCo that it requires all three types of broadband technology further confuses the issue for residents and local business trying to attract new business and investment.

We would urge the Committee and NBNCO to:

1. Consider the socio-economic impact of its current plans upon the future growth potential Berrigan Shire, in particular the township of Berrigan and the rural districts its services
2. Reassess the technical and operational justification for the exclusion of Berrigan and surrounding districts from the fibre optic network
3. Provide technical advice on the costs of extending the fibre optic network to Berrigan.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the Shire's Community Planning Officer, Jo Ruffin by phoning 03 58885100 or by email: joanner@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



ROWAN PERKINS
GENERAL MANAGER