



Australian Government

Government Statement of Response

Joint Select Committee on Cyber Safety

Second Interim Report

Cyber Safety for Seniors: A Worthwhile Journey

October 2013

Government Statement of Response

The Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the report of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber Safety titled *Cyber Safety for Seniors: A Worthwhile Journey*.

Introduction

The Australian Parliament established the Joint Select Committee on Cyber Safety (the Committee) in early 2010. The Committee inquired into and reported particularly on:

- the nature, prevalence and level of cyber safety risks and threats experienced by senior Australians
- the impact and implications of those risks and threats on access and use of information and communication technologies by senior Australians
- the adequacy and effectiveness of current Government and industry initiatives to respond to those threats, including education initiatives aimed at senior Australians
- best practice safeguards, and any possible changes to Australian law, policy or practice that will strengthen the cyber safety of senior Australians.

The Committee undertook a range of consultation activities in order to investigate these terms of reference, including receiving written submissions, public hearings and an online survey. The Committee tabled an interim report, *Cyber Safety for Seniors: A Worthwhile Journey*, on 16 April 2013 containing 13 recommendations.

Key messages of the report

The report provides an overview of current cyber safety concerns, as they relate to senior Australians. The report outlines how seniors use information and communication technologies, cyber safety risks and threats for seniors, educating and training seniors, consumer protection, regulation and enforcement and the role of industry.

Key themes that emerged from the inquiry are:

- Many seniors do not go online for banking or other services because they have concerns about the security of their financial and personal information.
- Many seniors who could benefit greatly from the use of online services miss out on those benefits because of their fears of online risks.
- Seniors are just as able as anyone to understand cyber safety principles given adequate training and information.
- Seniors need access to appropriate education and training to help them to be safe online.
- Government could play an increased role in providing funds to those volunteer groups and public libraries which are already training seniors in cyber safety.
- With increased funding, volunteer groups and public libraries could create new, appropriate training opportunities for seniors.
- There may be some laws and policy which could be updated to improve cyber safety for seniors.
- Internet service providers could play an increased role in helping seniors be cyber safe.

The Government is grateful for the work the Committee has undertaken on this important subject and to all those who contributed with their submissions and evidence to the Committee.

The Government's response on individual recommendations made by the Committee follows.

Government response to individual recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Australian Government investigates innovative ways of providing low cost internet connection to financially disadvantaged housebound and geographically isolated seniors who request it.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation in principle.

The Government understands that access to fast, affordable and reliable broadband is increasingly essential to the way Australians communicate, access services and do business. This is why the Government is committed to completing the construction of the National Broadband Network (NBN) and in doing so ensure that all Australians have access to very fast broadband as soon, as cost-effectively and as affordably as possible. NBN Co has advised the Government that to deliver broadband sooner, at less cost to taxpayers and more affordably for consumers, the NBN should be completed using a multi-technology mix. This will match the right technology to the right location and make use of existing networks where possible to deliver very fast broadband. This will save taxpayers \$32 billion, get the NBN finished four years sooner, and ensure that nine out of ten Australians receive download speeds of 50 megabits per second or more by 2019.

The Government is committed to ensuring that all Australians have access to fast, affordable and reliable broadband, regardless of where they live. Price caps for NBN services will mean that wholesale prices will be fair and affordable while providing NBN Co with flexibility to meet competitive pressure from other network providers.

The Government will be undertaking a series of reviews into the NBN including an independent cost-benefit analysis and review of regulation to analyse the economic and social costs and benefits (including both direct and indirect effects) arising from the availability of broadband via various technologies, and to make recommendations on the role of government support and a number of other long-term industry matters. Specific information on the Government's reviews will be made available on NBN Co's website at www.nbnco.com.au

Current NBN retail service prices compare favourably with prices for ADSL2+ and HFC broadband services and a number of providers offer discounts to eligible pensioners.

Telstra has released its first series of bundled plans that are NBN ready. As part of its pricing announcement on 27 February 2012, Telstra committed to providing its existing suite of voice-only plans on the NBN, including the Homeline Budget, which costs \$22.95 per month for those who want a voice only service.

There are a substantial number of providers signed up to provide retail telephone or internet services over the NBN. The Government expects that in future more service providers will release competitive pricing for broadband and voice only services.

Telstra is required by a carrier licence condition to offer a package of products and arrangements aimed at low-income consumers. This package, called 'Access for Everyone', comprises initiatives that address a wide range of low-income consumer needs, including

concessions to help offset line rental charges for eligible pensioners. This is a largely self-selecting package, enabling all those in need of assistance and benefits to claim them. Telstra is also required to maintain and appropriately resource a Low-Income Measures Assessment Committee (LIMAC). LIMAC's role is to assess changes to the package or to the marketing plan for the low-income package; and report annually to the Minister on the effectiveness of the package. The current members are representatives of the Australian Council of Social Services, Jobs Australia, The Smith Family, the Council on the Ageing (COTA Australia), Homelessness Australia, The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society, Anglicare Australia and the Department of Social Services (DSS). The Australian Communications and Media Authority and the Department of Communications have observer status.

Retail Price Controls also apply to a number of Telstra fixed line services. Retail Price Controls aim to ensure that efficiency improvements are passed through to consumers in the form of lower prices for telecommunications services in markets where competition is not yet fully developed, and also protect the interests of low-income and regional users of telecommunications services.

The Government also assists pensioners with the costs of home internet connection through the Pension Supplement. Prior to 20 September 2009, a higher rate of Telephone Allowance was paid to pensioners to assist with the cost of their home internet connection. After that date, as part of pension reforms, the higher rate of Telephone Allowance was rolled into the Pension Supplement, along with the Utilities Allowance, the GST Supplement, Pharmaceutical Allowance and an additional amount.

The Pension Supplement is indexed and accrues on a daily basis. Generally, it is added to the regular fortnightly payment made to recipients of the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and other eligible recipients. The maximum Pension Supplement from 20 September 2013 is \$61.70 a fortnight for singles and \$93.00 a fortnight for couples combined.

Broadband for Seniors also supports senior Australians on low incomes and those living in geographically isolated locations to access the internet by providing free access to computers and the internet at around 1,600 Broadband for Seniors kiosks across Australia. Seniors are able to visit the kiosks and receive free training and assistance, equipping them with the skills and confidence to use a computer and the internet while staying safe online.

Recommendation 2

That an advertising campaign targeting seniors be devised to alert seniors around the nation to the existence and location of the Broadband for Seniors kiosks.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation in principle.

The Government recognises the importance of raising awareness of the Broadband for Seniors program, particularly among seniors with low internet skills.

To assist with the ongoing promotion of Broadband for Seniors, kiosks are provided with products such as posters and flyers to assist in raising awareness within their community as to the existence and locations of kiosks. Additional awareness raising activities will continue to focus on:

- engaging with key adult education organisations that assist seniors such as COTA Australia, Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, Adult Learning Australia, and the University of the Third Age Online to disseminate information to their members about the benefits of Broadband for Seniors services
- linking with other Government initiatives that reach seniors
- promoting Broadband for Seniors on websites and social media frequented by seniors
- assisting individual Broadband for Seniors kiosks to promote their services at the local level

Recommendation 3

That the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy [*now the Department of Communications*] prioritise including some cyber safety information on their website in languages other than English.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation in principle, noting it will need to be considered against competing priorities in the budget context.

Communicating in languages other than English is a key element of multicultural access and equity. The Government currently funds agencies to have documents translated into languages other than English on a one-off basis, providing an avenue to improve the availability of translated materials.

The Department of Communications will review its' cyber safety publications and consider which documents are appropriate for translating into languages other than English.

Recommendation 4

That the Australian Government develops, as a supplement to its Web Guide, a web style guide prescribing the key elements of web design to ensure simplicity of language, visual clarity in design and logical navigation tools. This could be supported by graphical step-by-step tutorials for use where applicable.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation in principle.

The Australian Government *Web Guide* will be redeveloped into a *Digital Service Standard* and associated *Digital Design Guide* to ensure consistent design of all current and future digital services and information. It will promote accessibility for all and include the standards and design information that web managers and developers need to comply with in order to meet their legal and policy obligations.

The Australian Government also publishes the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*. It includes style guidance on the application of effective and inclusive language, and producing content for a digital audience, including visual design and layout. The *Style manual* is currently under review for contemporary upgrade to include more detailed digital publishing information.

Better Practice Principles, Guide and Checklists are also available to help executives, business managers, web managers and others to quickly improve their understanding of a range of issues associated with the provision of services online. These include *Writing for the web*, *Designing and managing websites*, *Testing websites with users* and *Managing online content*.

Recommendation 5

In support of the previous recommendation, the Committee also recommends that, in addition to conducting compliance audits based on the web style guide requirements, the Australian Government Information Management Office should offer an Annual Award for user friendly web design, in part based on public input on the utility of government websites.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation in principle.

The Australian Government requires agencies to report on their progress in implementing the World Wide Web's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0* (WCAG 2.0) as mandated under the *Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy*. The *Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy: 2010 Baseline Report* provides an overview of agency status. A second progress report is expected by the end of 2013.

However, it should be noted that there is no requirement for agencies to report to AGIMO on their compliance with the mandatory criteria set out under the Web Guide. Similarly, AGIMO does not undertake or initiate audits of compliance independently.

The annual 'Excellence in eGovernment Awards' require nominations to demonstrate how they address accessibility and usability issues and the 'Government 2.0' category of those awards allows for members of the public to nominate a project they believe is worthy of recognition.

Recommendation 6

That the Australian Government develops a centralised user friendly reporting and cyber safety awareness portal for all types of cybercrime with links to relevant regulators.

The site should feature a dedicated reporting tab, a seniors tab and be backed up by a telephone service which links individuals to appropriate victim support, training and other advice.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation.

In 2012, the Standing Council on Law and Justice and Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management agreed to the implementation of the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (ACORN). The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) and CrimTrac, in consultation with relevant state, territory and Commonwealth agencies, are now progressing implementation of the ACORN system.

ACORN will provide a centralised, internet-based system that will allow members of the public to report a number of cybercrimes and access general and targeted educational advice in relation to cybercrime. The system will refer reports to law enforcement agencies for further consideration as appropriate. It will also collect cybercrime data to assist in the development of a clearer cybercrime intelligence picture.

Amongst other things, the ACORN will provide targeted information to members of the public based on a range of inputs, including personal information (such as age) and the type of cybercrime being reported. As such, the ACORN's design will ensure it is accessible to all members of the public, including those with little to no technical or legal knowledge.

AGD will consult with other government departments in relation to linking the ACORN to the Broadband for Seniors website and other relevant cyber safety and cyber security material.

The Government will consider options for providing targeted information about existing victim support, training and other advice services.

Recommendation 7

In support of the above, the Australian Government should investigate options for the contracting of appropriate non-government organisations or private organisations to provide support and advice to victims of online and technology related crime.

The Australian Government agrees that support and advice should be made available to victims of online and technology related crime.

The Government will consider options for providing targeted information about existing victim support, training and other advice services.

Recommendation 8

That the Australian Government advertise the Broadband for Seniors initiative widely, including:

- a) launching a campaign publicising the internet kiosks using seniors clubs, magazines, newspapers, radio and television; and**
- b) widely advertising the new cyber safety telephone helpline, including on all government websites which host cyber safety information.**

The Australian Government agrees in part with recommendation 8(a). Please refer to the response to recommendation 2.

In relation to recommendation 8(b), as mentioned in the response to recommendation 6, the Government will consider options for providing targeted information about existing victim support, training and other advice services.

Recommendation 9

That the Australian Government work with the States and Territories to support public libraries or community resource centres where no public library exists, for the purpose of meeting the demand for cyber safety training for seniors.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation.

The Department of Communications has funded COTA Australia to develop and deliver a pilot cyber safety and security training package for senior Australians in Tasmania and New South Wales. The Department of Communications also currently partners with other seniors organisations, such as the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, to directly target senior Australians in delivery of its education awareness activities, including through the Stay Smart Online website, social media channels and the annual National Cyber Security Awareness Week.

The Australian Government is providing \$13.6 million in grant funding over four years from 2011–12 under the Digital Hubs program to help community members, including seniors, gain the skills needed to maximise the benefits provided by accessing broadband. The program has established Digital Hubs in 40 communities across all states and territories. Local residents are provided with digital literacy training and the opportunity to experience broadband-enabled services and technology. Digital Hubs are encouraged to run training courses on topics of specific interest to seniors.

The Internet Basics website (www.internetbasics.gov.au) provides a starting point for internet novices to build the skills and confidence needed to get online. The website is designed especially for people who are new to the internet, and those who wish to learn a little more to be confident and safer online. Senior Australians have been identified as a key audience for the Internet Basics website.

Introducing basic digital literacy concepts and internet terms in plain English, Internet Basics incorporates videos and text to help new users understand how the internet can benefit their daily lives. The website is divided into four main topic areas:

- what you can do on the internet
- getting started on the internet
- how to stay safe on the internet
- connecting to the internet.

From 1 July 2013, existing organisations hosting a Broadband for Seniors kiosks were eligible to apply for additional resources to support delivery of services to seniors including a \$2,000 grant to assist with the provision of training, particularly on issues of concern for seniors such as cyber safety and cyber security as well as a new computer with touchscreen monitor.

This training grant is in addition to the free and accessible information and training about cyber safety already provided through Broadband for Seniors, as part of a comprehensive package of training for seniors on how to use computers and the internet.

Public libraries, community resource centres as well as a wide range of other community organisations will continue to play a key role in delivering Broadband for Seniors services.

Recommendation 10

That Australian Government's cyber awareness campaigns should headline clear and practical messages for cyber safety on the central reporting and awareness portal, and appear up front of all published cyber awareness material for the general community.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation.

The Department of Communications will work closely with AGD and other relevant departments to ensure that current and future cyber safety campaigns are clearly linked and promoted through all relevant avenues, including through the ACORN.

Recommendation 11

That the cybercrime reporting tab on the central reporting and awareness portal be designed for ease of access to users and to facilitate data collation and assessment. The system should be supported by simple online instructions and accessible to the visually and aurally impaired, and for print in hard copy.

The Australian Government agrees with this recommendation.

ACORN will be designed for ease of access to users, and to facilitate data collection and assessment, and be supported by simple online instructions to ensure accessibility for the widest range of people in Australia.

The Government will take the Committee's recommendation into account when finalising the design of the ACORN system, including by ensuring the ACORN meets Australian Government standards for website accessibility.

Recommendation 12

That the Australian Government establish a consultative working group, with wide stakeholder representation, to co-ordinate and promote government and industry partnerships and initiatives in support of a healthy and secure online environment.

The Australian Government supports wide stakeholder consultation to co-ordinate and promote government and industry partnerships and initiatives.

The Government has established a new Online Safety Consultative Working Group (CWG) which will advise the Australian Government and the Children's e-Safety Commissioner (once established) in developing and implementing policies to improve the safety of Australian children online.

The CWG will meet twice a year and members are drawn from community groups, internet service providers, industry associations, business and government. The CWG will provide advice on measures to protect Australian children and young people from online risks including cyber bullying, abuse of children and young people online (including sexual grooming), exposure to illegal and harmful content, and online security issues.

As well as enhancing online safety for children, outcomes from the work of the CWG will help to keep seniors safe online. For example, the previous CWG contributed to the development of the Cybersafety Help Button, which was designed as a one-stop shop to provide cyber safety information for young people. Although designed for young people, the Help Button is available to everyone and has been installed on the Broadband for Seniors' website.

Recommendation 13

That the proposed consultative working group should examine the effectiveness and promote awareness of relevant industry codes of practice, and make recommendations to governments at all levels on these matters.

The Australian Government agrees with this proposal in principle. Please refer to the response to recommendation 12.