



# Country Women's Association of NSW

ABN 82 318 909 926

Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament

All Communication to be addressed to the Secretary of STURT GROUP Branch/Group

7 December 2011

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

**Attention: Inquiry Secretary**

**Submitted by email:** [jcnbn@aph.gov.au](mailto:jcnbn@aph.gov.au)

*Sturt Group CWA*

The Country Women's Association of New South Wales – Sturt Group looks forward to the economic and social opportunities that will be delivered to country, regional and rural New South Wales through the rollout of the National Broadband Network.

However, we are concerned that a number of communities will be economically and socially disadvantaged by the planned roll out and coverage being proposed by NBNCO. We recognise that NBNCO has sought technical advice, and for a number of operational reasons not all rural communities and the districts they service will have access to the national broadband network via the fibre optic cable and will be connected by next generation wireless or satellite.

Our submission relates specifically to social and economic consequences that will arise for the relatively densely populated rural Shire service centres of Jerilderie, Coleambally and Berrigan located in the southern Riverina and Murray River New South Wales and Victorian border Murrumbidgee and Murray irrigation districts.

These are communities that service district/Shire populations in excess of 1000 people that will not have access to fibre optic coverage and in the case of Jerilderie and Coleambally next generation wireless technology.

These irrigation communities are less than 35 kms from currently proposed fibre optic cabling routes Finley for Berrigan /Jerilderie and Darlington Point for Coleambally. These communities are 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 policy; and are recognised as having

- Limited adaptive capacity other than technology driven innovation and 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 neighbouring communities will further 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.

Primarily this will be because the human capital needed by our communities to adapt and remain competitive will be lost to regional service centres in Hay and or Griffith (Coleambally). And in the case of Berrigan, a likely consequence will be acceleration in the outward migration of residents and business from Berrigan Shire to Victoria.

We would urge this Committee and NBNCO to:

1. Consider the socio-economic impact of its current plans upon Berrigan, Jerilderie and Coleambally in the context of Murray Darling Basin Plan water reform agenda
2. Reassess the technical and operational justification for the exclusion of these communities
3. Provide technical advice to each community on the costs of extending the fibre optic network to Berrigan, Jerilderie and Coleambally.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Elizabeth Circuitt  
Secretary  
Country Women's Association of NSW  
Sturt Group