

October 29, 2009

Ms. Alison Kelly
Department of the Senate
Secretary
Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
Parliament House
CANBERRA, ACT 2600

Dear Alison

RE: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Following the Board's recent representations in Melbourne to the Select Committee on the National Broadband Network, the following advice is provided in relation to Questions on Notice:

Question on Notice 1

The investment over time by the State Government, through Victrack, in optic fibre within this region has been well received. For example, the 'dark fibre' recently installed within the University's Technology Park provides for significant broadband capacity and full redundancy to enterprises accessing this network. It is expected that the Victrack broadband infrastructure investment over the past 6 to 7 years will enable the National Broadband Network to be operationalised more fully and effectively within this region.

It is acknowledged that the COLT technology did not reach its full potential. However all the initial investment in COLT optic fibre within the Ballarat region (at the University and its Technology Park) is currently being utilised. For example, at the Greenhill Enterprise Centre, Technology Park, the COLT project has enabled all suites to be supplied with single and multi mode fibre networks.

Ballarat ICT does not have any understanding of the status of Visionstream and hence is not able to articulate a position.

Question on Notice 2

It is our understanding that there was little investment in broadband infrastructure in 2002 as it relates to 'the last mile'. Neighbourhood Cable (NC) has invested heavily in the supply and installation of a Hybrid fibre-coaxial (HFC), a broadband network which combines optical fibre and coaxial cable. The NC network only has partial coverage within the Ballarat region and HFC offers a reduced capability, compared with the offer provided through the NBN. In short, we simply do not envisage any level of serious duplication between existing broadband infrastructure and the NBN.

Question on Notice 3

Neither the City of Ballarat nor Ballarat ICT Ltd has comprehensive data on the prevalence of home based businesses generally but also specifically related to the ICT sector. Research which extends anecdotal evidence of increased flexibility in areas such as commuting or working from home would assist in confirming the extent to which work and travel patterns are influenced by access to higher bandwidth networks.

Yours sincerely



MAL VALLANCE
CHAIR