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Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
Department of the Senate
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Adelaide Hills Regional Development Submission to Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network

Dear Committee Secretary

Executive Summary

The Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board (AHRDB) supports the Australian Government's decision to encourage fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) infrastructure in greenfield estates that receive planning approval after 1 July 2010.

The AHRDB acknowledges the needs of Adelaide Hill's towns for high speed, competitive backhaul, and believes that there is a case to consider additional provision to several significant Hills towns not identified in the recent "Backbone Blackspots" tender announcements for South Australia. This should encourage lower prices and higher quality services.

It recommends that:

- an incentive be offered to developers, who have already received planning approval but have not yet completed the development, to encourage them to install FTTP rather than wait for NBN Co to retro-fit as a brownfield
- broadband access be considered as a utility similar to electricity, water and sewer when determining the regulatory approach
- additional funding be immediately released for competitive backhaul and breakouts from existing fibre optic infrastructure to allow regional towns access to high speed broadband as part of the "backbone" program.

Background

The Adelaide Hills Regional Development (AHRD) Board is established and mainly funded as a joint initiative between Local Governments in the Central Adelaide Hills (Adelaide Hills Council and the District Council Mount Barker) and the South Australian Government, to foster sustainable economic development in the Region.

The AHRDB supports strategies for sustainable development that are consistent with regional environmental objectives and the social needs of the region's communities. This includes community capacity building in areas such as employment and skills building, workforce and community development.

The Adelaide Hills region consists of two local government areas administered by the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) (population 39,028) & the District Council of Mount

Barker (DCMB) (population 28,270), both in the Federal electorate of Mayo. These local government areas are located immediately to the east of the Adelaide metropolitan area and consist of dormitory suburbs, small townships, a regional centre and rural land, split by the South Eastern freeway (M1) from Adelaide to Murray Bridge. Parts of the region are considered to be outer metropolitan Adelaide. (see maps: <http://www.adelaidehills.com.au/node/63>) There are 84 towns in the region, but only ten of these exceed 1,000 people.

Subdivisions are restricted in the Adelaide Hills Council area due to planning constraints related to metropolitan Adelaide water catchment area, but are common in the District Council of Mount Barker with many approved greenfield estates at various stages of development and several large developments under assessment.

Some new estates have RIMs with exhausted capacity, one of the larger estates has Telstra Velocity FTTH, but many other older estates have pair gain limitations, which generate a significant volume of complaints from residents, sometimes unaware at the time of purchase, that they may be unable to obtain ADSL broadband. Fixed wireless broadband is available in a limited number of areas currently without ADSL or fibre, but further development is limited by the availability of mobile wireless broadband, which prevents ABG subsidies.

Regional Growth and Demographics

Overall regional population growth is about 0.8% pa (ABS: June 2005 to June 2006), with Planning SA forecasting a population increase in the Adelaide Hills region from 64,293 to 74,741 by the year 2021. However this growth has not been uniform throughout the region, as the District Council of Mount Barker has been experiencing consistent growth that place it within the top 5 LGAs. With recent rezoning of 140 hectares of greenfields land in Mt Barker and the nearby townships of Nairne and Littlehampton, this is expected to continue with Planning SA predicting growth of 25% to 20,000 people by 2013.

The 2006 Census showed that the population of the Adelaide Hills Region is relatively young compared with the State average, with more than one third of its population under 25 years. As this demographic has a higher use and uptake of broadband, allowance should be made for above average usage.

Future demand is likely to be linked to regional economic opportunities such as wine and food tourism, the mining and resource industry and activities that service a growing population. Some of these are scoped in the recently released consultation draft 30 year Plan for Greater Adelaide, where targets are set for the Adelaide Hills and Murray Bridge of 29,000 additional population, 13,000 additional dwellings and 13,000 additional jobs (over 30 years)

Greenfield Developments

The Adelaide Hills region, has a large number of established housing estates, retirement villages and Council supported independent living facilities within its boundaries. In addition, there are greenfield developments in various stages of approval and development that are predicted to house another 10,000 people over the next twelve years. Existing developments range in size from 5 -1000.

Backbone Blackspots

The AHRDB believes that there is a case to include additional towns, not specifically listed to receive competitive backhaul under the recently announced "Backbone Blackspots" tender process.

The AHRDB recommends that backhaul to nine additional Adelaide Hills towns be provided beginning with **Meadows** (1726) in the south of the region through **Mt Barker** (11,160*), **Nairne** (3370*), **Littlehampton** (2395), **Hahndorf** (1919*), **Balhannah** (1028), **Woodside** (1685*), **Lobethal** (1738*), **Birdwood** (1127) then to the Barossa Valley in the north. This could be achieved with a backbone using a mix of fibre and radio, with breakouts from existing fibre, and a feeder distribution of radio, ADSL or WiMAX. (* population figures provided by BroadbandSA

Existing competitive backhaul is provided by fibre to **Stirling** (NextGen), and by microwave to **Mt Barker** from Murray Bridge (Agile/Internode). Breakouts from the NextGen fibre, could occur at **Aldgate** (3343), **Bridgewater** (3470), **Balhannah** (1028) and **Nairne** (3370), depending on the location of their fibre.

Needs

The following eleven Hills townships, currently without competitive backhaul, have retail/industrial zones, designated for development and would therefore benefit greatly from access to high speed broadband.

Those with local schools have been coded SS (secondary), PS (primary).
Aldgate (3343) [PS, PS], **Balhannah** (1028), **Birdwood** (1127) [SS, PS]
Bridgewater (3470) [PS], **Hahndorf** (1919) [PS], **Littlehampton** (2395) [PS],
Lobethal (1738) [PS, PS], **Nairne** (3370) [PS], **Oakbank** (449) [PS, SS],
Woodside (1685) [PS]

Contact Information

Should you require any further information in relation to any of these matters raised in this submission, please contact Mr Bob Geary, Regional Project Manager, broadband development, on telephone (08) 8391 1374 or email. bgeary@adelaidehills.com.au

Yours faithfully



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