

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the availability and access to enabling communications infrastructure in Australia's External Territories

My name is Glen Christian and I have over forty years experience in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry. My wife and I moved to Norfolk Island nine years ago where I started an ICT business supplying consumers and small business with ICT products, support, and networking solutions. Fast and economic internet is key to my business, this is true for many of my customers.

It is obvious how society, consumers and business are drawn (either willingly or unwillingly) to the internet. Whether it be for entertainment, education or the more mundane business of submitting TAX returns, internet access has become indispensable, and no more so than on remote Norfolk Island.

Norfolk Islands communication with Australia and the World is, as I understand it, delivered in one of four ways:

- Internet
 - NBN Sky Muster Satellite
 - Norfolk Island Telecom O3B Satellite
 - Telstra Satellite Data (only available as a leased private circuit)
- Telephone
 - Norfolk Island Telecom via New Zealand Satellite link
- Television
 - Satellite

The Committee should note – satellites used to deliver internet services are inherently flawed as a channel of communication. A satellite communication link has serious limitations;

- High latency (high delay)
 - Slows response
 - Prevents users of web applications working effectively e.g. Zoom meetings, VOIP, many other Cloud based solutions
 - Slows effective speed
- Slow speed – NBN maximum 25 Mbps, but upload speed of 2Mbps is the killer e.g. if I want to send large files to Australia or the World
- Prohibitive data caps
- Vulnerable to bad weather, especially low cloud

- Expensive to use
- Expensive to install - if the current subsidy is removed

I believe Norfolk Island, Australian companies and government would benefit should Norfolk Island have a submarine fibre optic cable installed. The benefits would be innumerable!!

Benefits:

- 25-year (plus) life expectancy (15 years for NBN Sky Muster, launched 5 years ago)
- Faster speeds and low latency
- Not affected by weather
- Australian Government departments located on Norfolk Island would have better quality and faster internet service e.g.
 - Australian Federal Police
 - Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Service (hospital)
 - Improve turn around time and quality of patient diagnostics sent to Australia
 - Facilitate remote teaching/education, and procedure (operations)
 - Bureau of Meteorology
 - Australian Border Force
 - Norfolk Island Central School
 - Office of the Administrator
- To name but a few
- Norfolk Island Telecom landline and 4G subscribers connected directly to Australia. With much improved call quality
- Attract business to Norfolk Island for:
 - Remote workers
 - Remote data and system backup
 - Remote data system fail-over
 - Remote data store in Australian Territory
 - Remote monitoring as a service (fire alarm, health alarms, security)

In 2021 I think it vital that Australian Territories like Norfolk Island consumers and business have access to quality, reliable, speedy, and low latency communication technologies which can only be derived via submarine fibre optic cable – it really makes sense, technically and economically.

Submitted by Glen F Christian, ICT Professional, Norfolk Island Business Owner and Community Member



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