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24 February 2011

Mr Andrew McGowan
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure & Communications
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr McGowan

Re: INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Committee's Inquiry into the National Broadband Network (NBN).

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) is very supportive of the proposed NBN. It is our view that expanded access to high-speed broadband services will do much to improve the quality of life for Australian citizens.

The NBN infrastructure will provide great benefits by enabling service leveraging on its ubiquitous high-speed communications.

The NBN will enhance the services that UWS routinely provides in learning, teaching and research:

1. It will enable UWS to deliver high quality learning materials to a wider audience. Problems related to equity of access, lags in communication and services, being limited by current capacity and speed will be resolved. The NBN will also complement the increasing use of mobile technologies like the iPad and the iPhone which provide an "always connected" environment.
2. Research and Innovation will benefit from a quantitative increase in the number of locations that are connected to high speed communications. This increases the pool of potential partners for collaboration in real time, which will improve the potential for research funding partners and ultimately improve and increase research outcomes and research dissemination.
3. The Federal government has a significant funding investment in the implementation of eResearch capability. Examples include the Super Science initiative and the creation of a number of supporting agencies such as ANDS, RDSI, ARCS and NeCTAR. Access to the NBN will be vital to ensure take-up of these facilities particularly while off campus or in the field.

4. The University has a particular interest in telemedicine and associated teaching and research. The NBN will enable more effective telemedicine services. Telemedicine will be a critical factor in equity in delivery of health services access the population and for regional and remote Australians in particular. Not only can the efficiency and quality of health care delivery be enhanced but overall health care costs may be significantly reduced leading to reduced demands on existing high cost services (i.e. hospitals, GP services, community nursing, etc.).
5. The NBN will enable a step change in the quality and take-up rate for the online delivery of programs and for that mode of delivery to be collaborative and engaging.
6. Community benefits from The NBN's high speed communications include:
 - a. Revival of regional and remote communities
 - b. Economic diversification and the resulting impact on a community's skills base
 - c. The reversal of population drain as more people stay in a region and more people and organisations are attracted to a region
 - d. The ability of communities to access services (whether they be health, education or government services) on a more equitable basis
 - e. The ability of communities to access markets as part of the digital economy
 - f. More feasible work from home arrangements which can assist with :
 - employment of people with disabilities and carer responsibilities
 - employment opportunities and levels generally;
 - reduced travel costs and congestion.

This will lead to stronger and more sustainable regional communities.

Yours sincerely

Professor Janice Reid
Vice-Chancellor