

# REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

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Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Infrastructure and Communications  
PO Box 6021 Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Secretary

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications' inquiry into the role and potential of the National Broadband Network.

The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee was established by the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999* to review the adequacy of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. In 2008, the Committee conducted an extensive public meetings program throughout regional Australia. During this process the Committee consulted consumers, industry and all levels of government on issues relevant to telecommunications in regional areas.

The Committee received over 220 submissions. A wide-ranging report was produced which contained 45 recommendations. The report was tabled on 15 October 2008.

The report's recommendations related to telecommunications infrastructure, the availability of broadband, fixed and mobile services, back-haul infrastructure, customer rights and representation, as well as the myriad of essential and day-to-day services that telecommunications can deliver.

During the Review, the Committee looked at the adequacy of existing telecommunications protection arrangements such as the Universal Service Obligation and the Customer Service Guarantee. Hence, the Committee's belief that it can provide relevant comment relating to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

The Committee did recognise the economic challenge of providing telecommunications services in many parts of rural and remote Australia. It also noted this should not diminish the importance of adequate telecommunications for achieving both social policy and ongoing rural and remote economic outcomes.

The Committee recognised the potential of the National Broadband Network to transform the consumer experience. It therefore recommended both long and short term reform to the consumer framework.

Aspects of a number of the Committee's recommendations are reflected in current Government programs as well as current and proposed regulatory reform packages.

On behalf of the Committee, I would be happy to appear before the Standing Committee during the public hearings in Brisbane on 28 March 2011, should it be considered useful. Please contact the Secretariat on  
to make the necessary arrangements.

Dr William Glasson AO

18 March 2011

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