

Submission No. 2

Dear Rob,

I'm writing to you in your capacity as chair of the NBN Implementation oversight committee. I live in Fernmount, a small hamlet of 200 houses 4km East of Bellingen. Unfortunately we are unable to obtain fibre to the premises if and when Bellingen receives the NBN roll out.

I believe you are going to receive a great deal of compliant as a result of the NBNCO policy for low-density regional communities. Currently we are facing a Hobson's choice as we are being offered fixed wireless broadband which will only ever be a 2nd rate service if the rest of the network is installed post-September 2013.

If we accept the fixed wireless NBN product and fibre to the premises is eventually installed four kilometres down the road in Bellingen, we will receive an untested system that will eventually provide a very small percentage of the overall bandwidth the NBN is capable of.

This will undoubtedly affect the value of all housing in Fernmount, not to mention the business development capability of the area, the capacity of people living within 5 km of each other to have an equal communications facility, and generally have a deleterious effect on the local regional economy after fibre to the premises has been installed as far as it is going to go. A large number of people living around Bellingen and I are quite angry and disappointed by this. I am sure this will be repeated up and down the East Coast of Australia where there are burgeoning satellite communities populated by ex-city dwellers who still telecommute. An attack on this group's communications equity in the dubious name of economy of scale is wrong and politically execrable.

It is appalling to hear the disingenuous humbug spewing from the conservative side of politics at the moment regarding the NBN and many other progressive policies you and Labour have introduced. Without new communications technology to replace the ailing and failing copper network there will be even less tax for those clowns to fight over. Without new and vibrant businesses, regional areas will wither and turn into intellectually barren hospices as a result of the high overheads required to rent premises in towns, drive through poorly maintained roads that are more frequently being destroyed by extreme weather events, deal with freight, distance etc etc. In short, many of the professionals that may be enticed to the regions to improve the areas occupational diversity will stay in the cities as the towns meet physical barriers to expansion and people living a kilometre away are denied communications parity with them.

The only answer here is to replace copper with fibre. At a base rate of \$27 per month, full uptake and the obvious increase in business usage that will occur, the income will begin at 4 billion dollars per year and the resultant surge in business cost savings and earnings will generate revenue that would embarrass even John Howard!!! Abbott is too dull to understand this.

Installation cost is a load of garbage crudely fashioned to scare us by the worshippers of the big end of town; the true cost will be retrofitting areas with FTTP when the obvious uselessness of Fixed Wireless and Satellite is exposed by rocketing bandwidth demands created by the speed of fibre itself once we factor this in as a norm in communications. The over politicisation of this particular set of essential infrastructure has forced moronic policy compromises on the areas in this country that cannot afford them and if these concessions to abject stupidity are not effectively repudiated and reversed the regions will remain a significantly less diversified and affluent location than they could be for a long time after your grandkids leave school.

I could go on all night about this but we all need some help here, Conroy won't do it, nor will Turnbull, it falls on the only principled and rational voice we have in this region. I hope you can help us.

Kind Regards
Marc Percival