



# BROADBAND FOR THE TROPICS

4 February 2014

Committee Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on  
Northern Australia  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
**CANBERRA ACT 2600**

[jscna@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscna@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

Broadband for the Tropics is a high level North Queensland committee formed some three years ago to encourage the North Queensland community to use high speed broadband to develop innovative uses of technology to improve business and lifestyle in North Queensland.

The catalyst for its formation was the knowledge that North Queensland cities were being afforded a priority position in the roll out of the NBN system.

The purpose of this letter is to draw to the attention of your committee just one particular aspect of our activities, an aspect which has importance to the task of your committee in scoping a white paper for the acceleration of the development of Northern Australia.

On 4 March 2013 we addressed a meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Council for Regional Australia. In that address we advised the council that we could identify (and, if approved, deliver) a project or projects which would be valuable and make a difference to Northern Australia.

The then Minister for Regional Development, Hon Simon Crean, invited us to deliver on that offer.

I enclose -

1. Tropical Innovation Projects - An Introduction
2. Tropical Innovation Projects - ICT Game Changers
3. Tropical Innovation Projects - Governance Proposal
4. Tropical Innovation Projects - Projects Outlines

At that time we estimated that the projects could be delivered at a cost of \$4m.

Copies of these documents were provided to now minister for Communications, Hon Malcolm Turnbull at a meeting with him in Townsville on 9 July 2013, and again in our letter to him of 14 October 2013

It was, and remains our view, that the topics covered by our proposed project underpin any form of northern development. As the proposal says, these projects are essential to build services and insights that can be used as both demonstrators and initiators of new approaches to business in tropical Australia. The paper also highlights how these services may be hosted at the Tropical Knowledge and Innovation Centre being developed by James Cook University (JCU) and Anittel at the JCU Townsville campus.

Broadband for the Tropics believes that it is important that your committee is aware of our earlier submission to the then Minister for Regional Development and then to the current Minister for Communications and that we continue to stand ready to initiate and deliver on these important projects to underpin whatever elements of development the white paper may identify.

Yours faithfully

**Col Harkness**  
Chair  
Broadband for the Tropics Committee  
North Queensland

Att.