

# WE-ROC

## Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils

Incorporating the local governments of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Tammin, Westonia & Yilgarn

Address: PO Box 6456 EAST PERTH WA 6892

Phone: 0427 854 478

Fax: (08) 9228 0071

Email: hwestcott@wsquared.com.au

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

Dear Sir/Madam

### A Further Enquiry into the National Broadband Network

I write on behalf of the local governments that comprise the Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WE-ROC).

WE-ROC is a voluntary regional organisation of councils that operates by way of a Memorandum of Understanding. It comprises six local governments located in the Central and Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia. Membership to WE-ROC is as follows:

Shire of Bruce Rock  
Shire of Kellerberrin  
Shire of Merredin  
Shire of Tammin  
Shire of Westonia  
Shire of Yilgarn

Member Councils note that The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications has commenced a new inquiry, with the Committee asked to examine the "capacity of the National Broadband Network to contribute to:

- the delivery of government services and programs;
- achieving health outcomes;
- improving the educational resources and training available for teachers and students;
- the management of Australia's built and natural resources and environmental sustainability;
- impacting regional economic growth and employment opportunities;
- impacting business efficiencies and revenues, particularly for small and medium business, and Australia's export market;
- interaction with research and development and related innovation investments;
- facilitating community and social benefits; and
- the optimal capacity and technological requirements of a network to deliver these outcomes.'



Shire of Bruce Rock



Shire of Kellerberrin



Shire of Merredin



Shire of Tammin



Shire of Westonia



Shire of Yilgarn

Whilst recognising the benefit that the National Broadband Network will bring to communities able to access this technology, access to the Network in the area covered by WE-ROC's member Councils (indeed most towns within the Wheatbelt of Western Australia) will be minimal if not non-existent due to the small populations residing within these communities.

This lack of access will penalise the residents within these communities. This lack of access will adversely impact upon each of the criteria the Committee has been requested to investigate, that is:

- the delivery of government services and programs;
- achieving health outcomes;
- improving the educational resources and training available for teachers and students;
- the management of Australia's built and natural resources and environmental sustainability;
- impacting regional economic growth and employment opportunities;
- impacting business efficiencies and revenues, particularly for small and medium business, and Australia's export market;
- interaction with research and development and related innovation investments;
- facilitating community and social benefits; and
- the optimal capacity and technological requirements of a network to deliver these outcomes.'

With the Commonwealth Government's commitment to the "roll out" of the National Broadband Network small communities such as those found throughout the Western Australian Wheatbelt are set to be further marginalised.

In addition to drawing the Committee's attention this serious situation, Member Councils of WE-ROC also seek some comment from the Committee as to possible solutions to this inequity and how technology can be implemented across small rural and remote communities in order that their residents may experience similar benefits to those with capacity to access the National Broadband Network.

I look forward to your response on this issue in due course.

Yours faithfully

**Helen Westcott**  
Executive Officer

20 February 2011