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Tasmanian Electronic Commerce Centre Pty Ltd

22 February 2011

Mr Andrew McGowan
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr McGowan,

Re: New Inquiry into the National Broadband Network

The Tasmanian Electronic Commerce Centre (TECC) appreciates the opportunity to provide a brief submission to the Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN). The TECC has a key role to:

- Raise awareness of e-commerce, and provide support and advisory services for businesses, business groups, digital practices, industry associations and communities.
- Support IT and communication infrastructure and technology developments that provide benefits to Tasmanian businesses and communities.
- Assist the development and promotion of viable digital services within Tasmania.
- Facilitate and support research into issues relevant to the uptake and use of smart business technology and digital infrastructure.
- Facilitate new opportunities for involvement in Tasmania for new information and knowledge based businesses.

The TECC is an active supporter of the NBN and the development and opportunities that constant high speed communications infrastructure will bring to regional Australia.

Sincerely,

Mr John *McCann*
CEO

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Commerce Centre Pty Ltd
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PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

NEW INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK – TERMS of REFERENCE

a) the delivery of government services and programs;

- The TECC believes that the NBN will greatly facilitate interaction between citizens and all levels of government. Delivery of government services and programs will be a significant driver of activity in developing the NBN. Health, education, access to personal information will enable individuals and governments to interact at a higher level and with greater ease (examples include online banking, eBay, airline bookings). The resultant productivity gains will enable governments at all levels to better target and resource new programs for service delivery, as envisaged under Government 2.0

b) achieving health outcomes

- NBN offers the opportunity to better co-ordinate ongoing health care through self monitoring, enabling clinicians the opportunity to receive regular updates on patient status, as well as allowing greater involvement and control by individuals in their own well being. By moving to an at home care model, the NBN will help facilitate new developments in the use of video for specialist medical consultations in rural and remote areas.

c) improving the educational resources and training available for teachers and students;

- NBN offers the opportunity to enhance existing remote learning initiatives within Australia's secondary and tertiary sectors. The ability to utilise full symmetrical services via greater bandwidth will allow greater participation and interactivity by students, teachers and trainers, as well as unlocking and introducing and sharing new types of content for educational users.

d) the management of Australia's built and natural resources and environmental sustainability;

- A pervasive network will allow greater opportunities to have environmental monitoring and remote sensing to take place, using both fibre and wireless technologies in a blended way. NBN will allow for new initiatives for smart grid, energy monitoring and reporting, within urban and rural areas for government, SME's, as well as individual households.



e) impacting regional economic growth and employment opportunities;

- The TECC has been active in researching regional growth and employment opportunities since 2002 in running Regional Broadband Forums around Australia. In 2003, the TECC released a report titled *Broadband in Regional Australia: Pulling Together the Threads – Dandolo Partners*, that looked at taking up the opportunities broadband can bring to communities. The TECC continued this work through the publication of the *Demand Aggregation Manual (Improving broadband services in regional Australia)*, on behalf of the Federal government in 2004.
- A growing number of studies overseas and in Australia point at the potential for greater economic growth. A recent UK report commissioned by Huawei Australia (*Connecting Communities, Dr Tim Williams, Feb 2011*) looks at and records the evidence of the benefits to economic growth, renewal and regeneration opportunities and greater lifestyle choices for local communities, residents and SME's in rural areas, who can access high speed communications.
- The TECC believe that the NBN infrastructure rollout will also allow rural and remote communities in Australia to experience the same benefits as described by Dr Tim Williams.

f) impacting business efficiencies and revenues, particularly for small and medium business, and Australia's export market;

- The TECC has been involved in regional broadband infrastructure projects and ecommerce activities for over a decade. Our experience has found that organisations which are innovative and have access to good communications networks are able to increase and grow their business, both locally and internationally.

g) interaction with research and development and related innovation investments;

- The TECC has identified as an issue the lack of clear statistics for a base line indicator and monitoring for the rollout of the NBN to assess impact, benefits and business case for the operation of the NBN in regional areas. Whilst organisations such as CSIRO and IBES are working in this area, the applied research issue around application development and uptake of services for the NBN is an area we believe that needs to be focussed upon, to generate real understandings of how mass take up and efficient utilisation will occur.



h) facilitating community and social benefits; and

- The TECC believes that the access to online services and information provided in an uniform manner is an important aspect for government to strive for, in order to ensure equitable access for individuals within society.

i) the optimal capacity and technological requirements of a network to deliver these outcomes.

- The TECC believes the deployment of fibre is a prerequisite for a long term, high bandwidth communications infrastructure asset. The TECC helped facilitate the tasCOLT FTTH trial in Tasmania and is cognizant of the benefits of fibre and its ability to scale up for future data bandwidth requirements. In addition, the TECC believes that there is also a place for mobile wireless broadband and sees both technologies as complimentary in delivering a mix of services, both for fixed point (fibre) and mobility (wireless).