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Contact: Alan Burgess

Inquiry Into the National Broadband Network
Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
Parliament of Australia
By Email to: ic.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr McGowan

NEW INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

The following is the response from Redland City Council to the questions raised by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications, new inquiry in to the capacity of the National Broadband Network to contribute to:

a) *The delivery of Government services and programs;*

- Community support services are currently based on non broadband delivery methods. The NBN will allow the ability to provide far more detailed and interactive Government services. For local government this will be particularly important for master planning exercises, community consultation, development applications, library services, economic development and tourism.
- Council services are provided in a number of locations around the city, in various depots and customer service centres. These are serviced by a variety of different information communications technology (ICT) systems to cater for the limitations of current infrastructure. NBN will provide considerable advantages over these systems, thereby increasing productivity and effectiveness.
- Modern applications are increasingly complex and data intensive, this trend is likely to continue. For example, many services are already linked to geographic interfaces and digital mapping. These systems are particularly important on a regional/local basis for such things as; the coordination of emergency services, environmental management, compliance, and ongoing operations and maintenance.

b) *Achieving health outcomes;*

- The increasing use of broadband applications to provide urgent or routine health support to remote or island communities is an area which will benefit significantly from the provision of the NBN. North Stradbroke and the Southern Moreton Bay islands are very difficult to access quickly during storms or emergency situations. The access to online real-time medical support will be a considerable bonus of the NBN.

- c) *Improving the educational resources and training available for teachers and students;*
- Access to quality interactive education services is particularly important to those with disabilities, or in remote/island locations. NBN will enable considerable advances in this area. Redlands currently has no university campus, therefore the ability to attend tutorials and interact with other students and teachers in real time has considerable advantages in terms of convenience and eliminating the costly need to commute.
- d) *The management of Australia's built and natural resources and environmental sustainability;*
- Technology to research, monitor and manage our built and natural environment is increasing rapidly. NBN will enable these new applications and techniques to be fully exploited, resulting in better environmental and natural resource management, and built form impact assessment and regulation.
- e) *Impacting regional economic growth and employment opportunities;*
- Redland is running out of Greenfield sites for new housing developments and its ability to cater for a larger population base is therefore limited. However, with a high percentage of the workforce (60%) employed outside the Council area, there is considerable opportunity to develop the local economy without a subsequent population increase. The development of NBN based small businesses, particularly home based, has the ability to increase local employment opportunities without the need for the development of new industrial areas or other (non NBN) infrastructure.
- f) *Impacting business efficiencies and revenues, particularly for small and medium business, and Australia's export market.*
- In Redland city up to 60% of the working residents work outside the City. This has significant impacts of the environment, road transport networks, health and lifestyle. In addition most of the businesses are small with 92% having turnover of less than one million dollars. Access to reliable high speed broadband provides a wide variety of alternative options, efficiencies gains and access to international markets through the use of such things as:
 - Telecommuting,
 - Teleconferencing,
 - Online businesses,
 - Tourism promotion,
 - International marketing, and
 - Multinational enterprises.
- g) *Interaction with research and development and related innovation investments;*
- New applications and remote sensing technology will play an increasing role in research projects. Many of these tools will be enabled through the NBN. This will be a considerable boon to environmental research. The technology can also be used to increase awareness of environmental issues. For example; North Stradbroke island is reported to be the best land based location to monitor the annual east Australian coast whale migration. Using local cameras and underwater microphones the migration can be witnessed throughout the world, in real time.

- Research and development is often undertaken in collaboration with many institutions around the world. NBN will ensure Australian researchers can be actively involved in global projects.

h) Facilitating community and social benefits; and

- Communities will increasingly use the internet to collaborate and network with other groups. For Councils the use of the NBN will enable many council services to be delivered more effectively. In particular library services and art exhibitions can be made accessible to even remote or island communities.

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

- In order for NBN to deliver these benefits there are a number of key enablers including:
 - The NBN must be available as widely as possible, particularly for islands and remote communities.
 - Digital information on the location and status of the NBN roll out must be available to Councils, and preferably compatible with GIS systems.
 - Clear and unambiguous legislation and policies for NBN, particularly industry standards and regulatory requirements for Local and State Government planning instruments.
 - Common standards for in-building requirements, for both new and existing buildings.

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