Question No: 481

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Internet

Senator Birmingham asked:
Has the department/agency experienced any internet problems, such as but not limited to slow internet or internet blackouts? If yes, what was the reason for this? Did it impact the Minister's office?

Answer:
In 2011-12 there were six reported events that affected internet availability. The cause of these events includes: software or configuration error and, in one case, a degradation of service believed to be caused by a distributed denial of service attack. These events affected all staff, and the Minister's Office.

Question No: 482

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staff Amenities

Senator Birmingham asked:
What amenities are provided to staff? Please provide a list.

Answer:
The amenities provided for use by Department staff include:
- Small kitchens at all office locations equipped with refrigerators and microwave ovens; and
- A staff amenities room located in the Department's Canberra office equipped with kitchen appliances is available for general staff use and for fund raising activities organised by the Department's Social Club.

Question No: 483

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Coffee Machines

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Has the department/agency purchased coffee machines for staff usage? If yes, please provide a list that includes the type of coffee machine, the cost, the amount, and any ongoing costs such as purchase of coffee or coffee pods and when the machine was purchased.

2. Why were coffee machines purchased?

3. Where did the funding for the coffee machines come from?

4. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the coffee machines? How much was spent on maintenance in 2011-12 and how much this financial year to date? Please include a list of what maintenance has been undertaken. Where does the funding for maintenance come from?

Answer:
1. No.

2. N/A.

3. N/A.

4. N/A.

Question No: 484

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For this financial year to date:

a) Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

b) Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

c) Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

d) Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

e) Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

f) Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

g) Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

h) Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

i) Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

j) What contractors have been employed by the department/agency? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

Answer:

a) The Department has not engaged Hawker Britton during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

b) The Department has not engaged Shannon's Way during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

c) The Department has not engaged John Utting & UMR Research Group during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

d) The Department has not engaged McCann-Erickson during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

e) The Department has not engaged Cutting Edge during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

f) The Department has not engaged Ikon Communications during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

g) The Department has not engaged CMAX Communications during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

h) The Department has not engaged Boston Consulting Group during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

i) The Department has not engaged McKinsey & Company during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 and has no plans for future engagement.

j) Details of the Department's contracts valued in excess of $10 000 are available on the AusTender website (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

While AusTender contains details of contracts valued at $10 000 or more, it is considered to be an unreasonable diversion of resources for the department to provide details of contracts valued at less than $10 000.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Question No: 485

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For financial year 2011 – 2012:

a) Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

b) Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

c) Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

d) Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

e) Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

f) Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

g) Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

h) Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

i) Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

j) What contractors have been employed by the department/agency? If yes, provide details (including the work undertaken and the cost).

Answer:

a) The Department has not engaged Hawker Britton during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

b) The Department has not engaged Shannon's Way during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

c) The Department has not engaged John Utting & UMR Research Group during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

d) The Department has not engaged McCann-Erickson during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

e) The Department has not engaged Cutting Edge during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

f)   The Department has not engaged Ikon Communications during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

g) The Department has not engaged CMAX Communications during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

h) The Department has not engaged Boston Consulting Group during the 2011-12 financial year and has no plans for future engagement.

i) In the 2011-12 financial year, the Department engaged McKinsey & Company to provide advice and assistance with regard to the design of elements of the Digital Productivity Package. The engagement was undertaken with an amendment to an established contract. It commenced on 27 October 2011 and was completed on 31 December 2011. Prior to this, the Department engaged McKinsey & Company to prepare the NBN Implementation Study that was released in May 2010.

j) Details of the Department's contracts valued in excess of $10 000 are available on the AusTender website (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

While AusTender contains details of contracts valued at $10 000 or more, it is considered to be an unreasonable diversion of resources for the Department to provide details of contracts valued at less than $10 000.

Question No: 486

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grants

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Please provide a list of all grants, including ad hoc and one-off grants for this financial year to date. Please provide details of the recipients, the amount, the intended use of the grants and what locations have benefited from the grants.

2. Have all grant agreement details been published on the department/agency's website within the required timeframe? If not, please provide details.

3. Please provide a list of all grants, including ad hoc and one-off grants for 2011-12. Please provide details of the recipients, the amount, the intended use of the grants and what locations have benefited from the grants.

4. Were all grant agreement details published on the department/agency's website within the required timeframe? If not, please provide details.

Answer:

1. Since January 2009, all grants, discretionary and non-discretionary, made by the Department have been published on the departmental website at **www.dbcde.gov.au**.

2. For the financial year to 30 September 2012, one grant was not published on the Department's website within the required timeframe. This grant has since been published and can be found on the departmental website at **www.dbcde.gov.au**.

3. In the 2011-12 financial year, all grants, discretionary and non-discretionary, made by the Department were published on the departmental website at **www.dbcde.gov.au**.

4. In the 2011-12 financial year, 24 grants were not published on the Department's website within the required timeframe. In all of these instances, the relevant details were published as soon as the omissions were identified.

Question No: 487

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payments of Accounts

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For this financial year to date, did the department/agency pay its accounts to contractors/consultants etc. in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)?
    a. If not, why not? Please provide details, including what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.

    b. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is/was interest being paid on overdue amounts and, if so, how much has been paid by the department/agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?

    c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:
1.

    a. For the period 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012, 1,118 payments were made of which 1,033 or 92.4% were made within 30 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice. The average number of days for all payments was 17.5 days.

    b. In line with Finance Circular No 2008/10, interest is payable to small business where "the amount of interest is more than $10 and the contractor has issued a correctly rendered invoice for the interest". No invoices have been received and no interest has been paid. From 1 September 2012, Finance Circular No 2012/02 - Procurement On-Time Payment Policy for Small Business took effect. No interest payments have been made under this policy.

    c. Not applicable.

Question No: 488

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payments of Accounts

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For 2011-12, did the department/agency pay its accounts to contractors/consultants etc. in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)?
   a. If not, why not? Please provide details, including what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.

   b. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is/was interest being paid on overdue amounts and, if so, how much has been paid by the department/agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?

   c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

   d. Have all accounts from 2011-12 been paid? If not, why not?

Answer:

1.
   a. For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, 4,994 payments were made of which 4,570 or 92% were made within 30 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice. The average number of days for all payments was 19 days.

   b. In line with Finance Circular No 2008/10, interest is payable to small business where 'the amount of interest is more than $10 and the contractor has issued a correctly rendered invoice for the interest". No invoices have been received and no interest has been paid.

   c. Not applicable.

   d. All accounts from 2011-12 that have been entered into the Department's FMIS have been paid.

Question No: 489

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Stationery Requirements

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What are the department/agency's stationery costs for the financial year to date?

2. What were the department/agency's stationery costs for 2011-12?

Answer:

The Department's stationery costs are recorded in an account that includes consumables, such as toner cartridges, kitchen supplies and the like. To attempt to provide data would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

1. The Department's expenses for stationery and other consumables for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 were $46,287.17.

2. The Department's expenses for stationery and other consumables for 2011-12 were $287,484.89.

Question No: 490

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media subscriptions

Senator Birmingham asked:
1. Has there been any change since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012) to your pay TV subscription?
   a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
   b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

2. Has there been any change since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012) to your newspaper subscriptions?
   a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
   b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

3. Has there been any change since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012) to your magazine subscriptions?
   a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.
   b. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

4. What was the 2011-12 cost for:
   a. TV subscriptions
   b. Newspaper subscriptions
   c. Magazine subscriptions

Answer:
1. No.
   a. NA.
   b. As at 30 September 2012, the total expense for pay TV subscriptions for this financial year to date was $1,396.75 (GST exclusive).

2. No.
   a. NA.
   b. As at 30 September 2012, the total expense for newspaper subscriptions this financial year to date was $7,429.47 (GST exclusive).

3. No.
   a. NA.
   b. As at 30 September 2012, the total expense for magazine subscriptions this financial year to date is $88.54 (GST exclusive).

4. The total expense for the 2011-12 financial year for:
   a. pay TV subscriptions was $7,565.04 (GST exclusive);
   b. newspaper subscriptions was $26,305.46 (GST exclusive); and
   c. magazine subscriptions was $22,143.80 (GST exclusive)

Question No: 491

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).

2. Are the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines being followed? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.

3. Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the total costs of the lounge memberships.

4. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.

5. For 2011-12, please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that includes airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).

Answer:

1. For the financial year to 30 Sept 2012, the total spend for departmental officers was $0.489m for domestic travel and $0.126m for international travel. The Department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow individual components of travel to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

2. All travel within the Department is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Finance Circular No. 2009/10 for domestic travel and Finance Circular No. 2009/11 for international travel. Additionally, prior to any travel occurring, delegates are required to ensure that the proposed travel arrangements meet the requirements of Regulation 9 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

3. Yes. For the financial year to 30 September 2012, the Department paid for seven employees' lounge memberships (1 SES and 6 non-SES officers), in line with the Department's Chief Executive Instructions and supporting documentation. These include lounge memberships with Qantas and Virgin. The Department does not record data in a way that would allow answering cost per employee. The total cost is $2,776 GST exclusive.

4. While there may be instances where Executive Assistants or other administrative staff members travel at the same time as an SES officer, this travel is assessed on a needs basis and is subject to the same value for money considerations as all other travel undertaken by departmental staff.

5. For the financial year 2011-12 the total spend for departmental officers was $2.480m for domestic travel and $0.409m for international travel. The Department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow individual components of travel to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

Question No: 492

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for 2011-12? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

2. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for 2011-12 from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

3. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for 2011-12 from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

4. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for 2011-12 from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

5. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

6. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

7. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

8. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

1. The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy total expense on legal services for 2011-12 were $6 215 779. $2 384 283 was expensed on external legal service providers. The expenses on legal services provided in-house were $3 831 496. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

2. The Department's expenses on legal services provided by the Australian Government Solicitor for 2011-12 were $520 046. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

3. The Department's expenses on legal services provided by private law firms for 2011-12 were $1 861 493. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

4. The Department's expenses on legal services provided by other sources for 2011-12 were $2 744. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

5. The Department's expenses on legal services provided with-in the Department from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 were $791 271.

6. The Department's expenses on legal services provided by the Australian Government Solicitor from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 were $7 978. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

7. The Department's expenses on legal services provided by private law firms from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 were $146 975. Data on individual contracts of $10 000 or more is available on *Austender* (**www.tenders.gov.au**).

8. The Department's expenses on legal services provided other sources from 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 were $0.

The Government does not generally disclose the content of legal advice received by the government and its agencies. It is important for any government to be able to make fully informed decisions based on comprehensive and confidential legal advice. As such only total figures for legal service expenditure will be provided.

Question No: 493, 494, 495

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

493 Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Has there been a change since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012) to the department/agency's guidelines on study? If yes, please provide details.

2. For this financial year to date, please detail all education expenses (i.e. in-house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Please include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Please also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

3. For 2011-12, please detail all education expenses (i.e. in-house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Please include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Please also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training for this financial year to date

494 Senator Birmingham asked:
1. In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
   a. Total spending on these services
   b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
   c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. The names of all service providers engaged

2. For each service purchased form a provider listed under (1d), please provide:
   a. The name and nature of the service purchased
   b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
   c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
   d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   e. The total amount spent on the service
   f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

3.   Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
   a. The location used
   b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training for 2011-2012

495 Senator Birmingham asked:

1.   In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for 2011-12:
   a. Total spending on these services
   b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
   c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. The names of all service providers engaged

2.   For each service purchased form a provider listed under (1d), please provide:
   a. The name and nature of the service purchased
   b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
   c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
   d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   e. The total amount spent on the service
   f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

3.   Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
   a. The location used
   b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

493, 494, 495 Answer:
   The Department's guidelines on study have not changed since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012).

   The Department conducted a range of in-house training programs over the period 1 July 2012—30 September 2012 covering: leadership; legal awareness; and technical and personal skills development. A total of 224 staff attended these internal programs; some staff

attended more than one session. Staff also attended conferences, seminars and professional skills training provided by external organisations. The Department has 41 employees participating in tertiary studies through the Department's studies assistance program.

The total expenditure for the period 1 July 2012—30 September 2012 relating to staff training (both internal and external) and associated costs, seminars, conferences, study assistance and the associated Fringe Benefits Tax was $213,919.96 (GST exclusive).

The total expenditure for the period 1 July 2011—30 June 2012 relating to staff training (both internal and external) and associated costs, seminars, conferences, study assistance and the associated Fringe Benefits Tax was $1,334,343.24 (GST exclusive).

Question No: 496

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Training for this Financial Year

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
    a. Total spending on these services
    b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
    c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
    d. The names of all service providers engaged
2. For each service purchased form a provider listed under (1d), please provide:
    a. The name and nature of the service purchased
    b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
    c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
    d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
    e. The total amount spent on the service
    f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)
3. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
    a. The location used
    b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
    c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
    d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:
The Department has not purchased media training services during the 2012-13 financial year to date.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2012

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Question No: 497

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Training for 2011-2012

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for 2011-12:
   a. Total spending on these services
   b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
   c. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (please provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. The names of all service providers engaged
2. For each service purchased form a provider listed under (1d), please provide:
   a. The name and nature of the service purchased
   b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
   c. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. The total number of hours involved for all employees (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   e. The total amount spent on the service
   f. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)
3. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
   a. The location used
   b. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
   c. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
   d. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:
The Department did not purchase media training services during the financial year 2011-12.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2012

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Question No: 498

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Birmingham asked:
1. Please list how many staff in each portfolio department and agency are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?

2. For this financial year to date please list which department/agency is providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff and their classification are in receipt of these payments.

3. For 2011-12 to date which department/agency is providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff and their classification are in receipt of these payments.

Answer:
1. Eligibility for the Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme is determined by the Family Assistance Office and is subject to a number of criteria including a work and income test.

2. The Department registered to participate in the scheme and was prepared to receive and make payments from 1 January 2011. This financial year to 30 September 2012, five claims have been received and the respective payments have been made. Classifications for these employees are as follows:

Classification	Number of employees
EL 1	5
Total	5

3. The Department registered to participate in the scheme and was prepared to receive and make payments from 1 January 2011. For 2011-12, sixteen claims were received and the respective payments were made. Classifications for these employees are as follows:

Classification	Number of employees
APS 5	2
APS 6	2
EL 1	11
EL 2	1
Total	16

Question No: 499

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Corporate Cars

Senator Birmingham asked:
1.   Please update if there have been any changes since Budget Estimates 2012-13 (May 2012):
    a.   How cars are owned by each department/agency?
    b.   Where is the car/s located?
    c.   What is the car/s used for?
    d.   What is the cost of each car for this financial year to date?
    e.   How far did each car travel this financial year to date?
2.   For 2011-12:
    a.   How cars are owned by each department/agency?
    b.   Where is the car/s located?
    c.   What is the car/s used for?
    d.   What was the cost of each car?
    e.   How far did each car travel?

Answer:
1.   No change since May 2012.

2.   a.   Nil
    b.   N/A
    c.   N/A
    d.   N/A
    e.   N/A

Question No: 500

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis this financial year to date? Please provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.

2. What are the reasons for taxi costs?

3. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis in 2011-12? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.

4. What are the reasons for taxi costs?

Answer:

1. For the period 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012, total departmental expense on taxis was $0.077m. The Department does not record taxi expense data in a way that would readily allow individual business groups to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

2. The use of taxis is assessed on a needs basis and is subject to the same value for money considerations as all other travel undertaken by departmental staff.

3. For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, total departmental expense on taxis was $0.303m. The Department does not record taxi expense data in a way that would readily allow individual business groups to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

4. Please see response for Question 2.

Question No: 501

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Please provide a breakdown for each employment classification that has a corporate credit card.

2. Please update if there have been any changes since Budget Estimates 2012-13 (May 2012):
    a. What action is taken if the corporate credit card is misused?
    b. How is corporate credit card use monitored?
    c. What happens if misuse of a corporate credit card is discovered?
    d. Have any instances of corporate credit card misuse have been discovered? List staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.
    e. What action is taken to prevent corporate credit card misuse?

3. For 2011-12 how many instances of corporate credit card misuse were there? Please list staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.

Answer:

1. As at 30 September 2012, there were 258 active cardholders in the Department. An official is eligible for a corporate credit card where the official:

   - is an SES officer;

   - purchases property or services on behalf of the Department;

   - travels on official business on behalf of the Department; or

   - is an officer who books travel on behalf of travellers.

2.
    a. No change.
    b. No change.
    c. No change
    d. There were 6 instances where officers erroneously used a corporate credit card for personal payment. The officers have been counselled and reminded of their obligations. All monies have been fully recovered.
    e. No change.

3.   There were 7 instances where officers erroneously used a corporate credit card for personal payment for financial year 2011-12. The officers have been counselled and reminded of their obligations. All monies have been fully recovered

Question No: 502

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Provision of Equipment

Senator Birmingham asked:
1. Is electronic equipment (such as iPad, laptop, wireless card, vasco token, BlackBerry, mobile phone (list type if relevant), thumb drive) provided to department/agency staff for this financial year? If yes, please provide details of what is provided, the purchase cost, the ongoing cost and a breakdown of what staff and staff classification receives it.

2. If electronic equipment (such as iPad, laptop, wireless card, vasco token, BlackBerry, mobile phone (list type if relevant), thumb drive) was provided to department/agency staff for 2011-12. Please provide details of what was provided, the purchase cost, the ongoing cost and a breakdown of what staff and staff classification receives it.

Answer:
1. Yes. SES officers, and other approved staff, are generally provided with either a mobile phone or PDA, and a device for remote access to the Department's network. The purchase price for equipment for Departmental staff falls into the range of:

   i.   Mobile handset (either phone or PDA): $500 - $1,000
   ii. Portable device (either laptop or iPad): $800 - $2,000
   iii. Wireless card: $220

   Communication expenses reported from the Department's financial management system includes expenses on items such as: PDAs, portable devices, wireless cards, broadband, fax machines, land lines, mobile phones etc. To attempt to provide disaggregated data would involve an unreasonable diversion of Departmental resources.

2. In 2011-12, SES officers, and other approved staff, were generally provided with either a mobile phone or PDA, and a device for remote access to the Department's network. The purchase price for equipment for Departmental staff falls into the range of:

   i.   Mobile handset (either phone or PDA): $500 - $1,000
   ii. Portable device (either laptop or iPad): $800 - $2,000
   iii. Wireless card: $220

   Communication expenses reported from the Department's financial management system includes expenses on items such as: PDAs, portable devices, wireless cards, broadband, fax machines, land lines, mobile phones etc. To attempt to provide disaggregated data would involve an unreasonable diversion of Departmental resources.

Question No: 503

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Electricity Purchasing

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Provide details of any update of the department/agency electricity purchasing agreement if there has been a change since Budget Estimates 2011-12 (May 2012).
2. What were the department/agency's actual electricity costs for 2011-12, and what are the budgeted costs for 2012-13?
3. What are the department/agency electricity costs for this financial year to date?

Answer:
1. No change since Budget Estimates 2011-12 (May 2012).
2. Electricity expenses/budget:
   The Department electricity expenses in 2011-12 were $243,137.44 (GST exclusive). The budget in 2012-13 is $270,000.00 (GST exclusive).
3. In 2012-13, electricity expenses to 30 September were $71,705.70 (GST exclusive).

Question No: 504

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Information for the Australian Greens and Independents

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Have any briefings been provided to the Australian Greens? If yes, please include:
    a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
    b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
    c. Have any briefing requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
    d. How long is spent undertaking briefings for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Please provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

2. Have any briefings been provided to the Independents? If yes, please include:
    a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
    b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
    c. Have any briefing requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
    d. How long is spent undertaking briefings for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Please provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

3. Were any briefings been provided to the Australian Greens in 2011-12? If yes, please include:
    a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
    b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
    c. Have any briefing requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
    d. How long is spent undertaking briefings for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Please provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

4. Were any briefings been provided to the Independents in 2011-12? If yes, please include:
   a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
   b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
   c. Have any briefing requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
   d. How long is spent undertaking briefings for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Please provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

Answer:
Parts (1) – (4)

Please refer to the tabled response to Senate Estimates Question on Notice 168 asked in May 2012. This remains accurate to end September 2012.

Question No: 505

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Shredders

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Did the department/agency purchase any shredders in 2011-12? If yes, provide details of how many shredders were purchased, the cost of each shredder, why each new shredder was needed and the purpose for which the shredder is to be used.

2. Has the department/agency purchased any shredders since Budget Estimates 2011-12 (May 2012)? If yes, please provide details of how many shredders were purchased, the cost of each shredder, why each new shredder was needed and the purpose for which the shredder is to be used.

Answer:

1. No.

2. No.

Question No: 506

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Protective Security Policy Framework

Senator Birmingham asked:
Please provide an update for your department/agency, including what is your current compliance level, what are you doing to manage risk, what is being done to comply with the mandatory requirements and details of any department/agency specific policies and procedures.

Answer:
The Department is progressively updating all policies and procedures with the introduction of the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF). The Department complies with the physical security guidelines and is seeking re-accreditation under the Information Security Manual for its network and major ICT applications, anticipated to be during the second quarter 2013.

The Department is following the risk acceptance process of dealing with identified risks by implementing mitigation strategies taken from industry best practice and advice from security agencies such as Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Australia and the Defence Signals Directorate.

A full report on the Department's compliance with the new framework is due August 2013. The Department has undertaken a gap analysis against the new requirements and developed a plan of work to meet the timeframe.

Question No: 507

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Office Locations

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Please provide a list of all office locations for all departments and agencies within the portfolio by:
   a. Department/Agency;
   b. Location;
   c. Leased or Owned;
   d. Size;
   e. Number of Staff at each location and classification;
   f. If rented, the amount and breakdown of rent per square metre;
   g. If owned, the value of the building;
   h. Depreciation of buildings that are owned;
   i. Type of functions and work undertaken.

Answer:

DEPARTMENT OF BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY (DBCDE)

Information is outlined in the following table.

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE)

(b) Location	(c) Leased or owned	(d) size	(e) Number of Staff at each location and classification	(f) If rented, the amount and breakdown of rent per square metre Or (g) If owned the value of the building; (h) Depreciation of buildings that are owned	(i) Type of Functions and Work undertaken
38 Sydney Avenue Forrest, ACT	Leased	8,975.2 m2	Total 625 staff in Canberra. Classifications range from APS1	$410/sqm/annum **(g) (h)-**Not Applicable	Office Accommodation

(b) Location	(c) Leased or owned	(d) size	(e) Number of Staff at each location and classification	(f) If rented, the amount and breakdown of rent per square metre Or (g) If owned the value of the building; (h) Depreciation of buildings that are owned	(i) Type of Functions and Work undertaken
			to the Secretary.		
44 Sydney Avenue Forrest, ACT	Leased	2,628 m2	The 625 staff specified above, are located in both 38 and 44 Sydney Avenue. The HR system does not store detail on the numbers of Canberra staff in each location separately. Classifications range from APS1 to SES Band 2.	Level 1 Suite 1A (626sqm)$413.34/ sqm/annum Level 1 Suite 2 (1024sqm) $477.33/sqm/annu m Level 2 (978sqm) $477.33/sqm/annu m **(g) (h)-**Not Applicable	Office Accommodation
31-33 Market Street, Sydney, NSW	Leased	1,738.5 m2	Total 71 staff in the Sydney Office. Classifications range from APS2 to SES Band 3.	Level 14 (384.5sqsm) $519.75/sqm/annu m Level 11& 18 (1354sqm) $516.63/sqm/annu m **(g) (h)-**Not Applicable	Office Accommodation

Question No: 508

Program No: Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media and Communications staff

Senator Birmingham asked

1. For all departments and agencies, please provide – in relation to all public relations, communications and media staff – the following, by department or agency:

   a. How many ongoing staff, the classification, the type of work they undertake and their location.

   b. How many non-ongoing staff, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location

   c. How many contractors, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location

Answer:

1. As at 30 September 2012, there were 17.8 FTE staff in the Department engaged in public relations, communications and media. All staff are based in Canberra other than one ongoing EL1 Public Affairs Officer who is based in Sydney.

   a. 14.8 ongoing FTE staff: 3 EL2 Public Affairs Managers, 6.8 EL1 Public Affairs, 5 Communication Advisers (APS 6).

   b. 3 non-ongoing FTE staff: one EL2 Public Affairs Manager, 2 Communication Advisers (APS 6).

   c. Nil contractors.

<div align="right">

Question No: 509

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Program No. Grants Pause

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grants Pause

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. To date how much of the 2012-13 budget appropriations has your department/agency received?
2. For 2012-13 please list each grant program your department/agency administers, and the total funding of each program.
3. Please list each grant program that has not been paused as part of the Government-wide grants pause.
4. Please provide the total cash value of each program that has not been paused?
5. Please list each grant program that has been "paused" as part of the Government-wide grants pause.
6. Please provide the total cash value of each program that has been paused, and the total value of all grants paused?
7. On what date did your department/agency receive advice from the government to pause certain grants programs?
8. Please list the dates on which the Minister for Finance met with senior department/agency officials to discuss the grants pause and on which the Minister overseeing your department/agency met with senior departmental officials.
9. From what date was your department/agency told to implement the grants pause? A. When did it do so?
10. Has your department/agency been provided with information regarding when the grants pause would end?
    a. If so, what was the date?
    b. Was your department/agency advised if it could communicate when the grants pause would end to grant applicants?
11. Please provide the advice your department/agency gave to Department of Finance regarding which programs should be included in the grants pause.
12. Did your department/agency receive advice/instruction from the Department of Finance regarding how best to communicate the grants pause to grant applicants, the media and other external stakeholders?
13. What information has been provided to grant applicants regarding the grants pause? Please provide scripts if these have been given to call centres, or any other information sheets which have been used internally for discussing the grants pause with applicants.
14. Has your department/agency been advised by the Department of Finance of further grants pauses in the future? If so
    a. When did you receive notification of future grants pauses?
    b. What is the date of future grants to be paused?
    c. Which grants programs will be paused?

     d.   What is total value of pauses in future grants programs?

     e.   When will notification of these future grants pauses be made public?

15. How many staff are employed to administer grant programs within the department?

16. During the Grants Pause, with what activities have these staff been involved?

     a.   Have staff been moved to other divisions during the grants pause?

17. During the Grants Pause, were decisions on grants being made, but applicants not alerted?

Answer:

1. Appropriation information is reported in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements of the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio. Appropriation information will be updated in the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

2. Information on grants awarded by the Department (including grant programs) is published on the Department's website. Guidelines and information on rounds of grants programs are also published on the Department's websites. Information on agency funding, including grants, can be found in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements.

3. On 27 August 2012, the Government decided to pause all grant rounds for 2012-13, that were not advertised and advertised rounds that were not finalised. Providing the list of grant programs that were not paused could disclose the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet's deliberations and, therefore, is not publicly available.
   Information on grant programs, can be found on the Department's website.
   Information on the outcome of the grants pause was reported in the 2012-13 Mid Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) and in the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012.

4. Refer answer 3.

5. Refer answer 3.

6. Refer answer 3.

7. On 28 August 2012, the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) released an Estimate Memorandum informing portfolio departments of the grants pause and sought information on grant rounds and programs in 2012-13 that were not advertised and advertised rounds that were not finalised.

8. Senior departmental officials met with the Minister on 13 September 2012 to discuss the impact of the grants pause on programs managed by the Department.

9. On 28 August 2012, Finance released an Estimates Memorandum informing agencies of the decision by the Government to pause grant rounds.
   The grant pause was implemented as per the decision of the Government.

10. The pause on grant programs ended with the release of the 2012-13 MYEFO. The outcome of the Government's decision was reported in the 2012-13 MYEFO and the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012. The Department was advised on 22 October 2012 it could communicate the end of the grants pause.

11. The information provided to Finance by the Department included: grant rounds; committed funds; purpose of the grant; and recipients of the grants. This information informed the briefing to the Cabinet's Expenditure Review Committee and, therefore, is not publicly available.

12. Finance provided standard talking points to all Portfolio Departments to use as necessary.

13. As the majority of the Department's grants were already committed, or between application rounds, there was no need to provide information to grant applicants.
14. No.
15. A small number of the Department's staff are involved in the administration of grants programs. Given the size of the Department, these staff are also engaged in other activities.
16. The grants programs administered by the Department have all been of an ongoing nature and, therefore, staff continued to work as normal.
    a. No staff were affected or moved during the grants pause.
17. No.

Question 510

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: Page 101-102 (16/10/2012)

Topic: Broadband Champions

Senator Birmingham asked:

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Has the department drafted articles for broadband champions that have been reproduced in their names?
Mr Harris: We have, yes.
Mr Robinson: Under their authority. Obviously, they would not put their names to the material if they did not agree with it.
Senator BIRMINGHAM: On how many occasions has this occurred?
Mr Robinson: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer

See QoN 512 from Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2012

Question No: 511

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: Pg 103 (16/10/2012)

Topic: Broadband Champions

Senator Birmingham asked:

Senator Conroy: We are happy to give you the list. It was not a question of knocking people back. We are happy to give you a list of the champions, what their sectors are, and where they live if you think that is relevant. I am happy to give you that on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: And perhaps you could provide the committee with the communications that go out on a regular basis to the champions.

Mr Harris: We can provide you with the sorts of information that have been provided through the department that I outlined earlier so that you can see it. It is not a question of creating some artificial signature on the bottom of an article. It is an information provision and advocacy role.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Not just the sort of information but the actual method, Mr Harris. We canvassed with NBN Co. last time—and they took this on notice—the matter of a billboard in the Los Angeles international air terminal promoting the NBN.

Answer:
List of Broadband Champions, sector and location as follows:

Name	Sector	Location
Ms Deb Sharkey	Business, online retail	Sydney, NSW
Dr Ric Simes	Business, economics	Sydney, NSW
Mr Paul Greenberg	Business, online retail	Ingleburn, NSW
Ms Rachel Dixon	ICT	Sydney, NSW
Mr Stuart Hamilton AO	Education	Melbourne, Vic
Mr Andrew Heslop	Social Inclusion	Double Bay, NSW
Mr Harold Mitchell AC	Media, advertising	South Yarra, Vic
Dr Helen Thompson	Regional	Ballarat, Vic
Prof Jim Barber	Education	Armidale, NSW
Prof John Wilson	Health	Melbourne, Vic
Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AO	Health	Altona North, Vic
Dr Bill Glasson	Health	Brisbane, Qld
Mr Dave Abrahams	Regional Australia, ICT	Central Coast, NSW
Mr Peter Blasina	Small business, ICT	Sydney, NSW
Ms Mary Nenke	Regional, Small business	Kukerin, WA
Dr Jane Burns	Youth, social inclusion	Sydney, NSW
Mr Jon Dee	Environment and sustainability, Teleworking	Newtown, NSW
Prof Peter Quinn	Science	Perth, WA
Ms Nan Bosler	Senior Australians	Sydney, NSW
Mr Graeme Innes AM	Australians with a disability	Sydney, NSW
Mr Darren Alexander	Business	Launceston, Tas

Information is provided to Broadband Champions on a regular basis via email only. These emails include: updates on the NBN rollout; Departmental programs; upcoming announcements; events and speaking opportunities; and information on activities undertaken by fellow Champions.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2012

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Question No: 512

Program No. Corporate & Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: DBCDE/NBN Articles

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How can Australians have faith in the objectivity of articles about the NBN if they were in some cases written by DBCDE? Does the Department accept that this sort of conduct amounts to the politicisation of the public service?

2. How many articles that were wholly or materially authored by DBCDE or NBN Co employees or contractors without this being acknowledged have appeared in non-Government publications during the past 12 months? How many were prepared? Please provide copies.

3. Has any material prepared by DBCDE or NBN Co included any criticism of the NBN over factors such as delays in the rollout?

4. Has the DBCDE prepared and/or contributed research to such articles in areas other than broadband? About the Convergence Review, Finkelstein inquiry, or proposed changes to media regulation, for instance?

5. How many articles have been published under the name of NBN Champions in the past 18 months that were actually prepared in whole or to a material degree by DBCDE and/or NBN Co? Can you please provide a list, and the outlets where they appeared? How many were prepared? Please provide copies.

Answer:

1. The preparation of material for publication is a normal part of any communication strategy designed to raise awareness of government programs. Material may include quotes from a spokesperson on behalf of a government program or highlight case studies from participants in a government program. Any material is provided to interested media outlets for their use: in some instances the material may be reproduced in full; in other cases only part of the material may be used.

2. Material related to the NBN and telemedicine, NBN and seniors, NBN and smart farming, NBN and women, and NBN and the Legal Assistance Program has been prepared by the Department. A media search has identified 12 articles published in various media outlets where this content was used in part or whole. Three articles were attributed to a broadband champion, one was attributed to staff of the publication; one was attributed to a named journalist; and the remaining seven had no attribution. The 12 articles identified in the media search are attached.

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Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

The Department is of the view that material provided to the media should be appropriately attributed. When providing material in future the Department will make it clear that appropriate attribution should be made. How publications treat attribution of material has, and will continue to be, a matter for them.

3. No.

4. No.

5. As indicated in the response to question 2, a media search has identified three articles that were attributed to broadband champions. Commentary from the broadband champions has appeared in approximately 260 press articles since 1 July 2011.

From the Mayor's Desk

NRF (Rex) Wilson

Warren Shire Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Geoff Fowler to the position of Acting Manager Engineering Services.

Geoff was born and raised in Warren and commenced his career in civil engineering with the Warren Shire as a Trainee Engineer.

He brings a wealth of experience to the position and will be a crucial member of our management team as we deal with the ever increasing complexity of local government.

Geoff has held many positions with various Councils across the state before he resigned from Campbelltown City Council to establish a consultancy business.

Our Engineering Services Department is by far and away the largest section of our organisation from both the members of staff and the allocation of financial resources and is therefore, the key to us delivering the full range of services expected by the community regardless of where they live.

Geoff has already travelled extensively throughout the shire to familiarise himself with the issues across the 10,700 square kilometres that go to make up the Warren Shire and has hit the ground running.

We wish him well for what could be described as a "coming home experience" while Council continues to pursue filling the position on a permanent basis.

The baby-boomer connection

Older Australians will benefit enormously by accessing high-speed broadband via the National Broadband Network (NBN), being rolled out across Australia.

By mid-century the proportion of over-65s is expected to increase to almost a quarter of the population and 3.5 million older Australians are expected to access aged care services every year.

Online services of direct importance to them include health and aged care, government service delivery, staying in touch with family and online shopping.

The Government's National Digital Economy Strategy includes initiatives to inform the older generation of simple steps they can take to protect themselves online, such as through National Cyber Security Awareness Week, the Stay Smart Online website and a free application, the Cyber-safety Help Button.

Under the Government's $15 million Broadband for Seniors initiative, up to 2,000 internet kiosks have been opened in participating community centres, retirement villages and clubs across Australia.

These are designed to help older Australians gain confidence using computer technology, build community participation and develop social inclusion.

The Government has also provided $13.6 million for a Digital Hubs program to help communities gain skills to maximise the benefits of the NBN, initially involving 40 communities that benefit from the NBN where work on the rollout has already begun.

Broadband Champion Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AO, Chair of the Council of the World Medical Association, said a safety and access framework has been developed "to provide multiple layers of security and surety for older Australians, to encourage safe participation in the electronic world powered by high-speed broadband."

A Byte about computers.....with Gus Napier

From what I have said up until now you may think that you don't want to have anything to do with cookies.

They do allow owners of websites to leave information on your computer to allow them to recognise who you are and what your likes are when you next visit that site, and also to feed back to some advertising agency much the same information. Sometimes there is malicious intent lurking behind the use of cookies.

To look on the other side, however, many prominent and legitimate websites will not let you access much information, if any, on their site unless you have cookies enabled in your web browser software.

If you don't like the negative aspects of cookies, you can turn this function off in your browser. The browser will then prevent websites from loading cookies onto your computer.

In Internet Explorer, go into "Tools", down to "Internet Options." When this window opens select the "Privacy" tab. At this level you will find an adjustment slider with explanations alongside for different levels of automatic response. You can also select the "Advanced" button in this window where there are further settings you might like to play with, but normally it is not necessary. Just use the slider on the previous screen, and select the level of control you want.

Whilst the above describes accessing the settings for cookies in Internet Explorer, the method is much the same for Firefox or Safari and other web browsers. If your browser program does not have steps similar to the above, look for "Preferences" under (usually) the file menu. A bit of searching you will find it. There may be slightly different wording; just look for similar meanings.

As an aside, when you are in this area making settings changes, you will also find other things you can set or control, such as blocking "pop-up" advertising which appears on certain websites. You will also find screens for deleting individual or multiple cookies and records of what websites you have visited.

Deleting records of sites you have visited is the same as deleting your browsing history, so if you want to find that informative site you visited last month, you will have to search for it afresh if you have cleared your history.

Council to attend Country and Regional Living Expo

Warren Shire Council will be taking part in the Country and Regional Living Expo (CaRLE) from 3rd to 5th August 2012 and will be exhibiting along with other Councils from the Orana region.

The event is held in Sydney each year and exhibitors range from local government to medium and large businesses, real estate agents, government departments and not for profit organisations.

Jobs and business/investment opportunities are displayed on boards at the entrance to the Expo and therefore we would like to invite local businesses to contact us with details of any current job or business/investment opportunities that you would like to be promoted.

This information will also be displayed on the CaRLE website - http://crlexpo.com.au/index.php

The Expo generally attracts between 7,000 and 10,000 people over the course of the three-day event and in 2011 just under 9,000 people attended.

This presents a great advertising opportunity and a chance to interface with Sydney residents interested in a country or regional life change.

Sarah Slack-Smith
Warren Economic Development Officer

Financial planning seminar held in Warren

Around 50 people with an interest in financial planning, global economics, share markets and investing were treated to an evening with Peter Nixon, financial advisor and raconteur extraordinaire last Friday night in the upstairs room at the Warren Sporting and Cultural centre. Mr Nixon, who is an advisor with the Sydney based firm Drexlar Nixon Advisory, was in Warren for the weekend and held a number of seminars and client visits on both Saturday and Sunday.

* Some of those who attended the seminars - back, Alex Ramsay, Didi Simmons, Robyn Nadin, Ruth Maxey, Lou Webb, Maree Glasson, Juliana Egan, Jude Fleming, Michelle O'Neill, and front Jenny Irving, Jo McCalman, financial advisor Peter Nixon, Bron Plunkett, Audrey Weston.

The Baby Boomer connection

OLDER Australians have a special place among the objectives of the Australian Government's National Digital Economy Strategy, and stand to benefit enormously by accessing high-speed broadband via the National Broadband Network (NBN) currently being rolled out across the country.

That is why the Government is turning its attention to helping seniors build knowledge and confidence to access online services of direct importance to them – including health and aged care, government service delivery, communication with family and online shopping; and to take advantage of what the NBN has to offer.

Research by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) indicates that seniors are increasingly interested in learning digital skills. The two most popular skills of interest for those aged 55 and over were how to manage personal information online, and how to use the internet safely.

It's true that senior Australians are engaging online more than ever before – however a number of barriers still prevent older people from accessing the internet, those being; identity theft, where to start, irrelevance, affordability, understanding internet language and accessibility.

The Australian Government is planning – and committed to – supporting initiatives to meet these challenges, because by mid-century the proportion of over-65s is expected to increase to almost a quarter of the population, and 3.5 million older Australians are expected to access aged care services every year; and by then, the numbers of those aged 85 and over are likely to rise from 1.8 per cent to 5 per cent.

Such projections come at a time when more than two-thirds of current health expenditure relates to treatment or management of chronic diseases, putting the healthcare system under great pressure to adopt new, digital strategies to deliver high-quality services to communities.

So how is the Australian Government tackling these issues?

Under the Government's $15 million Broadband for Seniors initiative, up to 2000 internet kiosks have been opened in participating community centres, retirement villages and clubs across Australia – they are designed to help seniors gain confidence using computer technology, surf the internet, send emails and learn in a supportive and friendly environment, all without cost

The Australian Government has provided $13.6 million to establish a Digital Hubs program that will help communities to gain the skills needed to maximise the benefits provided by the NBN.

The Digital Hub will provide local residents with online training and the opportunity to experience NBN-enabled services and technology; as well as engaging with senior groups in conferences and seminars to promote cyber-safety

For example, the National Digital Economy Strategy includes initiatives to inform the older generation of the simple steps they can take to protect themselves in the online environment through National Cyber Security Awareness Week; the Stay Smart Online website (www.staysmartonline), a key source of information on cyber-security and cyber-safety issues and protection; the Cyber-safety Help Button, a free application that provides internet users with easy online access to cyber-safety information and assistance; The Easy Guide to Socialising Online website (www.dbcde.gov.au/easyguide) which provides cyber-safety information on 26 social networking sites, search engines and online games.

A submission to the Federal Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety for seniors, said the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) system is the next step in using e-health to enhance the healthcare system, particularly for older Australians.

"Older Australians are a key target group. The benefits of participation for this community are centered on improved continuity of care (thereby enabling improved management of chronic disease), improved coordination and follow-up of acute episodes, reduced adverse drug events, and improved personal control over health information."

E-Health has the potential to ease pressures on health services by making easier the safe and secure access to, and communication of, health information.

Broadband Champion, Nan Bosler, president of the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA), said that to benefit the elderly, antivirus software should be installed on all new computers prior to sale; and e-health tools be designed to be used with an absolute minimum of technical knowledge.

Discussing e-health as a major advantage to older Australians, Ms Nan said, "E-health is going to be absolutely marvelous; the NBN rollout is going to make such a difference.

"They are trialing the use of e-health for oncology, for psychiatry, for dental, for wound management and that's just the tip of the iceberg of what e-health is going to mean for older people and everyone right across Australia."

NBN to benefit seniors

OLDER northsiders will reportedly benefit enormously by accessing high-speed broadband via the National Broadband Network (NBN), being rolled out across Australia.

By mid-century the proportion of over-65s is expected to increase to almost a quarter of the population and 3.5 million older Australians are expected to access aged care services every year according to the Treasury Intergenerational report 2010.

Online services of direct importance to them include health and aged care, government service delivery, staying in touch with family and online shopping.

The Government's National Digital Economy Strategy includes initiatives to inform the older generation of simple steps they can take to protect themselves online, such as through National Cyber Security Awareness Week, the Stay Smart Online website and a free application, the Cyber-safety Help Button.

Under the Government's $15 million Broadband for Seniors initiative, up to 2,000 internet kiosks have been opened in participating community centres, retirement villages and clubs across Australia, designed to help older Australians gain confidence using computer technology, build community participation and develop social inclusion.

The Government has also provided $13.6 million for a Digital Hubs program to help communities gain skills to maximise the benefits of the NBN, initially involving 40 communities that benefit from the NBN where work on the rollout has already begun.

Broadband Champion Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AO, Chair of the Council of the World Medical Association, said a safety and access framework has been developed "to provide multiple layers of security and surety for older Australians, to encourage safe participation in the electronic world powered by high-speed broadband."

Another Broadband Champion, Ms Nan Bosler, President of the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA), said, "...The NBN rollout is going to make such a difference to what e-health is going to mean for older people and everyone right across Australia."

IT plans for older Aussies

OLDER Australians have a special place among the objectives of the Australian Government's National Digital Economy Strategy.

They stand to benefit enormously by accessing high-speed broadband via the National Broadband Network (NBN), currently being rolled out across Australia.

That is why the Australian Government is turning its attention to helping seniors who lack the same level of exposure to computer technology as that of younger generations; those who are in danger of missing out on what ubiquitous broadband has to offer.

Appearing before the select committee on behalf of the National eHealth Transition Authority, broadband champion Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AO pointed out the need for the elderly to have access and capability in terms of broadband and the internet.

"It's not just about the individual's ability to access the material, but about having the IT to work the system and the broadband connection," he said.

"And it's not just about the size of the print, but the speed of the access."

NEW DIMENSIONS IN
TELEMEDICINE

RESEARCH IN VICTORIA IS PAVING THE WAY FOR E-HEALTH APPLICATIONS USING THE POTENTIAL OF THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK.

By Information Age staff

One of the most groundbreaking telemedicine projects currently being undertaken in Australia is at the University of Ballarat, which is trialling a number of world-first high-definition three-dimensional telemedicine applications.

The HD3D telemedicine project is led by Associate Professor Andrew Stranieri of the School of Science, Information Technology and Engineering at the university's Centre for Informatics and Applied Optimisation.

The work is being carried out in collaboration with the Victorian eResearch Strategic Initiative (VeRSI), the Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES), the Melbourne Dental School, ITS Research Services, the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne, Ballarat Health Services and Northern Health in Melbourne, as well as with many health care groups in Melbourne and western Victoria.

The full project comprises four proof-of-concept projects to test and trial innovative ICT hardware/software to be used for the tele-assessment, diagnosis and follow-up of patients located at a distance

from the relatively small number of highly trained clinical specialists in aged care and geriatric services, oral health, oncology, wound management and psychiatry.

Sub-projects are in home care, mind care, aged care, and bush care:

● **Home care**, to trial the use of HD 3D cameras in the patients' homes;

● **Mind care**, to trial the use of HD 3D units to provide better access to specialised neuropsychiatric assessments;

● **Aged care**, to trial and model general and specialist healthcare support to Heritage Lakes Aged Care centre; and

● **Bush care**, to trial provision of specialist cancer care to patients at the Nhill and Horsham hospitals.

The program's primary funding through the Victorian government's Broadband Enabled Innovation Program was made possible when the NBN turned a set of good ideas about a suite of telemedicine operations into a potential reality. ■

TELE-DENTRISTY

There is a dearth of oral health care services in aged care facilities, mainly because it can prove difficult and expensive for nursing homes to get a dentist to visit. Many nursing home residents end up with few or no dental assessments, and there is such a shortage of dentists that those who are available simply do not have the time to travel to nursing homes.

The tele-dentistry trial involves two locations, with the dentist stationed at the Melbourne Dental School. The University of Melbourne and an aged care centre in the Melbourne suburb of South Morang are also involved. The Morang centre is an early NBN rollout site, which means that with NBN broadband it can fast-track the real-time version of the trial.

In the trial, a nurse at the aged care centre uses a camera resembling an electric toothbrush for dental scanning, from which a dentist makes an assessment at a distance on a high definition screen with high resolution video streaming. With the NBN's speed of transmission, the dentist will be able to interact both with the patient and the nurse in real time.

From these assessments, the dentist identifies and prioritises residents' care and generates treatment plans and advice, particularly important because epidemiological and clinical data suggest that many dental infections end up as a severe threat to overall health of these older patients. Many conditions, including pneumonia – a big killer among the elderly – start off as minor oral infections. It is hoped that the tele-dentistry trial will nip these infections in the bud.

TELE-ONCOLOGY

Ballarat has only three oncologists serving all of the cancer patients in that city as well as all of the western districts right up to the South Australian border. The specialists have to make a six-hour return drive — a big outlay in an oncologist's day — to these two areas once a week.

Tele-oncology involves consultations between an oncologist in Ballarat and cancer patients in Nhill and in Horsham, some 300 and 400km respectively from Ballarat.

The oncologists work either from consulting suites using the NBN's high-speed broadband, or from Ballarat Hospital, which uses the inter-hospital broadband network. It also means a nurse practitioner, with readier access to the oncologist as a result of high-definition 3D at the Horsham end, can work closely with the patients in tele-consultation.

HD 3D brings realism and clarity, particularly important in oncology for the assessment of medical conditions resulting from chemotherapy or radiotherapy as well as seeing musculature in three dimensions. Such realism extends to improve measurement not only of physical dimensions but in terms of muscular suppleness used in the assessment of degradation, enhancing the treatment plan.

The trial is assessing how high-definition 3D can be made to work more efficiently over the Internet using a broadband-enabled network at NBN speeds.

This can also involve assessment of MRI scans at a distance, where the specialist has simultaneous vision of the patient and of

Nurses at an aged care facility scan patients' teeth for assessment by a dentist.

the scans. Then, at the flick of a switch, the patient is also given the opportunity to see the scan so that specialist and patient can discuss it.

All of these trials will begin from May this year. After the installations have been built, trials involving real installations and real patients will take place over the next eight months.

TELE-PSYCHIATRY

The tele-psychiatry trials involve the Ballarat Psychiatric Unit at Ballarat Base Hospital and the Horsham Hospital, connecting to a specialist in neurological assessments from the University of Melbourne's Department of Psychiatry.

Many psychiatric patients who live in the western districts are admitted to the Ballarat Psychiatric Unit, so this project aims to link them with psychiatrists and social workers back home. The realism of HD 3D allows full neurological assessment that is capable of visualisation of very fine motor movements such as pupil dilation.

Until the advent of the NBN, this had to be done face-to-face, but in this study, the patient will be at home in Ballarat while the psychiatrist is in Melbourne.

The trial is also looking at the extent to which HD 3D enhances the accuracy of assessments. As with tele-oncology, this can also involve evaluation at a distance of MRI scans, with the ability for the patient also see the scan and discuss it with the specialist.

TELE-WOUND MANAGEMENT

A high proportion of the people admitted to hospitals are elderly people with wounds that begin as small scratches or bedsores. In the elderly, these wounds can deteriorate quickly and can be hard to heal.

A nurse visiting a home or an aged care facility often has to make difficult decisions about the best way to treat these wounds.

An example of one difficulty in such cases is a wound that appears to be healing from day-to-day because improvement is taking place at the top of the wound, but not beneath it. Only a wound specialist nurse can recognise that this type of healing is occurring.

In Ballarat there are very few wound management specialist nurses with the skills necessary to make those sorts of assessments.

Once the NBN rollout is complete in Ballarat, a nurse visiting a patient in the home armed with a 3D video camera will be able to link into the NBN and take images of the wound. A wound specialist will then be able to make an assessment and advise on the best course of treatment. Currently, these situations require the wound specialist to travel to the patient's home or for the patient to travel to the wound specialist.

A spin-off research process is to use computational intelligence to develop a program which can automatically detect the depth of a wound using 3D images, an important indicator of healing.

TELE-GERIATRICS

The HD 3D tele-geriatric trial is between an aged care centre and geriatricians at Melbourne's Northern Hospital.

What is different about this trial is that more peripherals are needed, such as patient monitoring devices such as digital stethoscopes and equipment to register vital signs such as ECG, blood pressure and oxygen levels.

The NBN has a bandwidth capable of efficiently connecting the aged care centre back to the hospital and for these measurements to be transmitted in real time across the Internet.

As with other telemedicine applications, it is also possible to use NBN broadband for communication involving patients with other interested parties such as specialists at a distance, including experts from overseas, consulting physicians and family, while simultaneously transmitting complex visual and textual data.

ROLE OF THE NBN

Associate Professor Stanieri says the trials, as with many other NBN-assisted applications, are of "extraordinary value" to the health of people who live in Australia's far-flung regions or nursing home residents who while not being remotely located are unable to travel to see specialists due to their age or condition.

"In addition to its cost-effectiveness and productivity gains, the tele-consultations under trial will create records leading to improved practice models, and play an important part in solving many

problems besetting Australia's health system," he said.

Stanieri's team is implementing high-definition medicine for specific kinds of consultations to save patients and clinicians time, energy and money.

"This work will result in better care for many thousands of patients, no matter where they may live in Australia," he says. "There is an air of excitement about the projects we are exploring under the banner of HD 3D telemedicine — doing new things in new ways. It's impossible to put a dollar value on that."

Nan Bosler, president of the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, has become a "Broadband Champion." "The HD 3D telemedicine project enabled by the rollout of the NBN shows Australia as a world leader," she says.

"These identified important health issues impact severely on those who live at a distance from expert medical attention. It has long been essential that these needs should be addressed. At last the establishment of the NBN is beginning to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of those who live in regional and rural areas."

A specialist in the use of communication technology as a mechanism for community development, Dr Helen Thompson, director of the Centre for eCommerce and Communications at the University of Ballarat, says significant innovation in service delivery was being demonstrated through the 3D telemedicine projects.

"A whole new era of healthcare will be ushered in as a result of the rollout of the NBN across regional Australia," she says.

Another Broadband Champion, Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AO, chair, World Medical Association and former national president of the AMA, said the use of new health technologies brings care to where it is preferred — closer to where the patient lives.

"Telehealth consultations by web-enabled video-conferencing is another string to the clinician's bow.

"It increases therapeutic options, patient access, patient choice and convenience — all better deployed using high-speed broadband at each end of the care episode."

Dr Mukesh Haikerwal: new technologies brings care to where it is preferred — closer to where the patient lives.

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Legal advice for all via NBN

A 'BUSH lawyer' in common parlance refers to an unqualified legal adviser, as graphically depicted in Banjo Paterson's poem of that name. It is also a type of blackberry growing in New Zealand.

But there is another kind of bush lawyer – qualified in every sense, dispensing much sought after legal services in regional Australia.

These dedicated, hardworking professionals have chosen country life, regardless of the perceived advantages offered by metropolitan practice.

They make a personal sacrifice in terms of remuneration and the more highly developed legal infrastructure available in metropolitan Australia.

Yet they remain steadfast, while many other young qualified lawyers depart the bush for coastal cities.

Some of those who quit the countryside (and who believe the myth that practising in the bush is somehow of lower professional value) leave behind problems of recruitment and retention of solicitors and other legal professionals in many regional and remote parts of Australia.

Indeed, in these locations it is hard to find a lawyer, and in finding one in distant towns or cities, the rural citizen inevitably runs into problems of access.

The Australian Government has taken steps to deal with the increasing problem of the legal tyranny of remoteness, recruitment and retention of legal practitioners in rural, regional and remote areas.

Working with legal assistance services and the private legal sector, the Government is funding initiatives aimed at raising awareness of problems facing lawyers and communities in these areas and contributing to initiatives to alleviate these problems and encourage long-term solutions.

On March 6, the Attorney General Nicola Roxon and Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Stephen Conroy jointly opened round one of the $4 million NBN Regional Legal Assistance Program, to help regional community legal services take advantage of the National Broadband Network.

This program envisages once the NBN is rolled out, all Australians, no matter where they live, should have access to the same quality community legal services.

Calling the program "a digital bridge over the legal divide between regional and metropolitan Australia", Ms Roxon said grants under the program would "challenge applicants to identify innovative and collaborative ways of providing legal assistance and sharing knowledge more effectively with regional community legal services."

Senator Conroy said the program would provide funding to support NBN-based trials to increase access to legal assistance in regional areas, where it can often be limited.

"The NBN presents enormous opportunities for a dramatic improvement in access to professional training and expert legal services in regional Australia," Sen Conroy said.

The first round of funding will be allocated to legal assistance providers receiving Australian Government funding, including legal aid commissions, family violence prevention legal services, indigenous legal services and community legal services.

Broadband Champion and director of the University of Ballarat Centre for eCommerce and Communications Dr Helen Thompson said the NBN meshed well with non-government activities designed to narrow the divide between the city and the bush.

"They will also support the community legal service sector in taking advantage of the NBN."

Dr Thompson said the NBN would dramatically improve the capacities of online legal services by providing access to high-speed broadband to all Australian premises.

■ **FORWARD THINKING: Broadband champion Dr Helen Thompson.** Photo: Contributed

Broadband may save stroke victims

Professor John Wilson and Dr Mukesh Haikerwal

by Frank Smith

WHEN someone has a stroke the first few minutes are vital. As the National Broadband Network spreads it will enable medical specialists to treat anyone anywhere in Australia instantly.

In a demonstration last month, Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, chair of the Council of World Medical Association linked up a mock stroke victim at the emergency department of Wangaratta district hospital with his GP's surgery and specialists at Royal Melbourne Hospital in real time using high-speed broadband video conferencing and 'Attend Anywhere' telehealth management software.

Immediately on the patient's arrival by ambulance at hospital, Dr Ian Wilson and Dr Leslie E Bolitho were there to confirm that the patient has, indeed, suffered a stroke. They were then able to bring the Royal Melbourne Brain Centre into the conversation, requesting a video consultation with neurologist, Professor Bernard Yan.

Dr Haikerwal, acting as the patient's GP, joined the video conference discussion to add information about his patient's medical history.

Broadband multiple conferencing in such cases increases the opportunity to apply effective treatment within the "golden hour" of the attack. It also ensures that the type of stroke suffered is diagnosed correctly and that the appropriate therapy can be safely applied.

Broadband allows the stroke neurologist to access, in high definition, a computerised pictures archive via a secure link, using standard computers and clinicians and medical registrars to review a brain scan and discuss their findings.

The video-conference link also facilitates direct assessment of the patient and for local clinicians to demonstrate clinical signs and symptoms.

The patient and their families, if present, can ask questions about the proposed 'clot-busting' treatment.

Rural doctors, nursing and allied health staff can take the opportunity to top up their skills in the management of acute stroke.

Strokes are caused by a blockage of one of the arteries in the brain resulting in interrupted blood supply.

The Stroke Foundation says stroke costs Australia more than $2 billion a year, and is Australia's second single greatest killer after coronary heart disease causing 34 per cent of deaths. Stroke kills more women than breast cancer and more men than prostate cancer.

In 2012, Australians will suffer around 60,000 new and recurrent strokes — that's one stroke every 10 minutes. Nearly 12000 people will dies as a result. Stroke is the underlying cause of death in about 40 per cent men and 60 per cent of females.

Stroke is also a leading cause of disability. About 88 per cent of stroke survivors live at home and most have a disability.

Dr Mukesh Haikerwal said the NBN will extend the reach of high-speed broadband, enabling wider access to telehealth services in regional areas, and to more GPs, medical specialists, other health providers, and importantly to patients in their own homes.

This allows medical professionals separated by distance to simultaneously participate in real time video consultations, including exchange of patient data and to provide high-quality and timely diagnosis and treatment of patients in remote areas.

Over 55 Canoe Club – April update

Canoers at Chapman Pool, Augusta during the February Camp.

DURING our summer break (when it is too hot for paddling), the club had two evening barbecues in January and February at Matilda Bay.

Both these events were well attended and the members enjoyed getting together once more.

Our 'safety day' at Hillarys Boat Harbour on 8 March was even better than usual.

On the day, members were given less time on theory and more time on the water, or in the water, than previously.

Everyone voted the day a huge success and the committee is deciding whether to organise more of these days later in the year.

A great social event, a breakfast-morning tea was held on the 22 March at the Secret Garden in South Perth.

For further information about the club, please call Peter on 9409 3813.

Stan Wallin

NBN narrows the divide: one law for all

A 'bush lawyer' in common parlance refers to an unqualified legal adviser, as so graphically depicted in Banjo Paterson's poem of that name. It is also a type of blackberry growing in New Zealand.

But there is another kind of bush lawyer – qualified in every sense, dispensing much sought after legal services in regional Australia.

These dedicated hard-working professionals have chosen country life, regardless of the perceived advantages offered by metropolitan practice. They make a personal sacrifice in terms of remuneration, and the more highly developed legal infrastructure available in metropolitan Australia. Yet they remain steadfast while many other young qualified lawyers depart the bush for coastal cities.

Indeed, in these locations it is hard to find a lawyer, and in finding one in distant towns or cities, the rural citizen inevitably runs into problems of access.

The Australian Government is taking steps to deal with the increasing problem of the legal tyranny of remoteness, recruitment and retention of legal practitioners in rural, regional and remote areas.

Working with legal assistance services and the private legal sector, the Government is funding initiatives administered by the Attorney-General's Department, aimed at raising awareness of problems facing lawyers and communities in these areas and contributing to initiatives that aim to alleviate these problems.

On March 6, the Attorney-General, Nicola Roxon, and Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Stephen Conroy jointly opened round one of the $4 million NBN Regional Legal Assistance Program, to help regional community legal services take advantage of the National Broadband Network (NBN).

This program envisages that once the NBN is rolled out, all Australians, no matter where they live, should have access to the same quality community legal services.

Calling the program 'a digital bridge over the legal divide between regional and metropolitan Australia', Ms Roxon said grants under the program would 'challenge applicants to identify innovative and collaborative ways of providing legal assistance and sharing knowledge more effectively with regional community legal services.'

The first round of funding will be allocated to legal assistance providers currently receiving Australian Government funding, including legal aid commissions, family violence prevention legal services, Indigenous legal services and community legal services.

Director of the University of Ballarat Centre for eCommerce and Communications (CeCC), Dr Helen Thompson, said the NBN meshed well with non-government activities designed to narrow the divide between the city and the bush.

'For example,' she said, 'Since 2004 the CeCC had been working with the community legal service sector to foster innovation through adoption of new approaches to delivering information and services online.'

These websites were designed to make it possible for Australians, no matter where they live in Australia, to access quality community legal services. They include Rural Law Online, at www.rurallaw.org.au; Disaster Legal Help, at www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au; Law 4 Community and Smart Justice Australia, at www.smartjustice.org.au. The National Association of Community Legal Centres, at www.naclc.org.au is another great example. It uses blogs, twitter and other social media to promote sector collaboration and knowledge sharing.

New dimensions in telemedicine

THE University of Ballarat is leading the field in Australia in trialling a number of world-first high-definition three-dimensional telemedicine applications which will be available widely with the introduction of the National Broadband Network.

The technology will be particularly beneficial to areas such South Gippsland where a high proportion of patients must travel to the city for specialist consultations.

The HD3D telemedicine project is led by Associate Professor Andrew Stranieri, of the School of Science, Information Technology and Engineering at the university's Centre for Informatics and Applied Optimisation.

Associate Professor Stanieri said the trials, as with many other NBN-assisted applications "are of extraordinary value to the health of people who live in Australia's far-flung regions — or nursing home residents who while not being remotely located are unable to travel to see specialists due to their age or condition".

He said his team was implementing high-definition medicine for specific kinds of consultations to save patients and clinicians' time, energy and money.

"This work will result in better care for many thousands of patients, no matter where they may live in Australia.

"There is an air of excitement about the projects we are exploring under the banner of HD 3D telemedicine — doing new things in new ways.

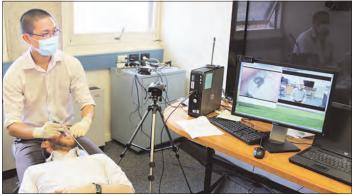"It's impossible to put a dollar value on that."

The full project comprises four proof-of-concept projects to test and trial innovative ICT hardware/software to be used for the tele-assessment, diagnosis and follow-up of patients located at a distance from the relatively small number of highly-trained clinical specialists in aged care/geriatric services, oral health, oncology, wound management, and psychiatry.

Tele-dentistry

Delivery of oral health care services in aged care facilities is according to many reports at really low levels.

It's very difficult and expensive for nursing homes to get a dentist to visit. So many nursing home residents end up with few or no dental assessments.

A nurse at the aged care centre uses a camera (resembling an electric toothbrush) for dental scanning, from which a dentist makes an assessment at a distance from visuals on a very high definition screen with high resolution video streaming. With the NBN's speed of transmission, the dentist will be able to interact both with the patient and the nurse in real time.

From these assessments, the dentist identifies and prioritises residents' care, and generates treatment plans, including advice — particularly important because epidemiological and clinical data suggest that many dental infections end up as a severe threat to overall health of these older patients.

Many conditions, including pneumonia — a big killer among the elderly — start off as minor oral infections. It is hoped that the teledentistry trial will nip these infections in the bud.

Tele-oncology

Ballarat has only three oncologists serving all of the cancer patients in that city as well as all of the western districts right up to the South Australian border. They have to make a six-hour return drive — a big outlay in an oncologist's day — to these two areas once a week.

Tele-oncology involves consultations between an oncologist in Ballarat and cancer patients in Nhill and in Horsham, some 300 and 400km from Ballarat.

Sometimes patients have to travel to Ballarat, not always to see an oncologist, but a radiologist, radiotherapist or other clinician.

It's difficult enough for someone who is healthy to make such a journey, but if you're not so well it's a major and costly burden, often ending up as an overnight stay.

HD 3D brings realism and clarity, particularly important in oncology for the assessment of medical conditions resulting from chemotherapy or radiotherapy as well as seeing musculature in three dimensions. Such realism extends to improve measurement not only of physical dimensions but in terms of muscular suppleness used in the assessment of degradation, enhancing the treatment plan.

The trial is assessing how high-definition 3D can be made to work more efficiently over the internet using a broadband enabled network at NBN speeds.

This can also involve assessment of MRI scans at a distance, when the specialist has simultaneous vision of the patient and to the scans. Then, at the flick of a switch, the patient is also given the opportunity to see the scan so that specialist and patient can discuss it.

Tele-psychiatry

Psychiatric patients who live in rural areas often have episodes resulting in their admission to a psychiatric unit in a major centre. The project aims to link them with psychiatrists and social workers back home, using the realism of HD 3D which allows full neurological assessment capable of visualisation of very fine motor movements such as pupil dilation.

Until the advent of the NBN, this had to be done face-to-face, but in this study, the patient will be at home in Ballarat (an NBN rollout area) while the psychiatrist is in Melbourne.

Under trial is the extent to which HD 3D enhances the accuracy of assessments.

As with tele-oncology, this can also involve evaluation at a distance of MRI scans, when the specialist has both vision of the patient and the scans, with the ability for the patient also see the scan and discuss it with the specialist.

Tele-wound management

A high proportion of admissions to hospitals comprises elderly people with wounds that begin as small scratches or bedsores. In the elderly, these wounds deteriorate rather than heal.

A nurse visiting a home or a nursing home has to make difficult decisions — often requiring wound management specialisation — about the best way to treat these wounds.

An example of difficulty in such cases is a wound that appears to be healing from day-to-day because improvement is taking place at the top of the wound, but not beneath it. Only a wound specialist nurse can recognise that this type of healing is occurring.

Once the NBN rollout is complete in Ballarat, a nurse visiting a patient in the home armed with a 3D video camera will be able to link into the NBN and take images of the wound. A wound specialist will then be able to make an assessment and advise on the best course of treatment.

Currently, these situations require the wound specialist to travel to the patient's home or for the patient to travel to the wound specialist.

Tele-geriatrics

What is different about the HD 3D tele-geriatric trial is that more peripherals are needed, such as patient monitoring devices, including a digital stethoscope and equipment to register vital signs such as ECG, blood pressure and oxygen levels.

The NBN has a bandwidth capable of efficiently connecting the aged care centre back to the hospital and for these measurements to be transmitted in real time across the internet.

As with other telemedicine applications it is also possible to use NBN broadband for communication involving patients with other interested parties such as specialists at a distance, including experts from overseas, consulting physicians and family, while simultaneously transmitting complex visual and textual data.

Congratulating Associate Professor Stranieri and his team on their work, Broadband Champion, Nan Bosler, president of the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, said, "The HD 3D telemedicine project enabled by the rollout of the NBN shows Australia as a world leader.

"These identified important health issues impact severely on those who live at a distance from expert medical attention.

"It has long been essential that these needs should be addressed.

"At last the establishment of the NBN is beginning to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of those who live in regional and rural areas."

The tele-dentistry project is one of the many examples of how the NBN and high-definition three-dimensional telemedicine applications will benefit the health sector, particularly in regional areas. Photo: IBES (Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society).

NBN offers a new kind of connection with the land

By Dr Helen Thompson, Director of the Centre for eCommerce and Communications, University of Ballarat

Today, farmers face additional challenges posed by climate change, threatening more droughts and flooding rains impacting the very viability of crops and pastures.

There is no doubt, however, that spatially enabled agriculture technologies, coupled with the carrying capacity and lightning speed of the National Broadband Network (NBN), will help farming communities cope better with the adverse effects of future weather on Australia's rural landscape.

Spatially enabled agriculture technologies bring the latest in technologies and methods together to get the best out of farming. These include tools that:

· measure and map the yield and quality of crops and pastures;

· guide machinery around paddocks to minimise compaction;

· help farmers target inputs like fertiliser and water to exactly where and when they are needed;

· inform maintenance of biodiversity and habitat on farms; and

· improve workflow, safety and communications between farmers and service providers.

The NBN will give farmers an ability to cleverly manage fertilisation of the land and optimise their water supply.

According to Professor David Lamb, Head of Physics at the University of New England, Broadband connectivity potentially enables spacial technologies to reduce crop fertiliser use in Australia by between 10 and 30 per cent.

Integrating technologies using the NBN can provide a foundation for real-time monitoring of the state of pasture, crops and livestock in extensive farming systems. This provides a framework for developing tools for real-time yield prediction and services.

A report in April 2011 by Inovact Consulting, for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, entitled *New Connections Driving Innovation and Productivity - Opportunities for Rural Industry Development from Innovative Use of Broadband Services*, found that 74 per cent of farmers are connected to the internet.

North West Star, Mount Isa QLD
17 Jul 2012, by Dr Helen

General News, page 6 - 352.54 cm²
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While farmers are less likely to be connected via broadband than other households, broadband use is rising rapidly, from only 9 per cent of farms in 2005, to 2007 when 39 per cent were using this form of connection.

A grower could use technology to monitor soil moisture over time, using an electromagnetic induction device to track infiltration rates and estimate how much moisture is likely to follow rain; the time to sow; and the optimal time to apply fertiliser.

A wide variety of other information can be connected and cycled to a service provider who could put the information into an actionable form for the farmer, including:

· urgent telehealth or other services are wanted:

· a farmer would like a study course to be undertaken from home;

· social networking is advantageous;

· finding and opening new export markets;

· allowing producers to engage more efficiently with suppliers; and

· expanding and better serving the farmer's customer base.

Smart chips located in devices and assets can provide valuable information to the farmer, such as:

· when to service important fire extinguishers or first aid kits

· safety and security in high risk work areas;

· tilt-roll alarms going off on tractors and other farm vehicles.

What the NBN offers is a connected farm, safer and healthier, as a 'command centre' - a network of soil, plant, weather, machinery and asset sensors streaming intelligence into the farmhouse via information service providers located anywhere in Australia.

As the NBN grows and extends its take-up among farmers, it promises an advanced type of video conferencing to put an end to a common difficulty experienced by service providers - too much time spent on the road travelling between farms.

NBN-enabled farming also offers the means to achieve improved environmental outcomes through highly efficient use of resources, as spatially-enabled technologies can reduce the water and carbon footprint of farming.

And by increasing our national productivity in this way, an NBN-enabled agricultural sector stands to benefit the entire nation.

A new connection with the land

DR HELEN THOMPSON

EVER since European settlement, drought, flood, rising costs, shortages of skills and labour, remoteness and the need for services have bedevilled the Australian farmer.

Today, farmers face additional challenges posed by climate change, threatening more droughts and flooding rains impacting the very viability of crops and pastures.

There is no doubt, however, that spatially enabled agriculture technologies, coupled with the carrying capacity and lightning speed of the National Broadband Network (NBN), will help farming communities cope better with the adverse effects of future weather on Australia's rural landscape.

Spatially enabled agriculture technologies bring the latest in technologies and methods together to get the best out of farming.

The NBN will give farmers an ability to cleverly manage fertilisation of the land and optimise their water supply.

According to Professor David Lamb, Head of Physics at the University of New England, broadband connectivity potentially enables spacial technologies to reduce crop fertiliser use in Australia by between 10 and 30 per cent.

Professor Lamb's research shows that on irrigated farms it has been shown that, given timely strategic decisions based on practical information enhanced by the NBN, one could double the yield per ML of water used and significantly improve workflow management.

Whether climate variability will create an increasingly stressful environment, this spacial-NBN duality has the capacity to enhance agricultural strategic management in its own right.

Integrating technologies using the NBN can provide a foundation for real-time monitoring of the state of pasture, crops and livestock in extensive farming systems.

This provides a framework for developing tools for real-time yield prediction and services.

A report in April 2011 by Inovact Consulting, for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, entitled New Connections Driving Innovation and Productivity - Opportunities for Rural Industry Development from Innovative Use of Broadband Services, found that 74 per cent of farmers are connected to the internet.

The ABS reported that in 2007-08, a full 90 per cent of all farms with an estimated value of agricultural operations of $1 million or more used the internet for business operations.

What the NBN offers is a connected farm, safer and healthier, as a 'command centre' – a network of soil, plant, weather, machinery and asset sensors streaming intelligence into the farmhouse via information service providers located anywhere in Australia.

Layers of knowledge can generate new results to solve problems in the paddock.

As the NBN grows and extends its take-up among farmers, it promises an advanced type of video conferencing to put an end to a common difficulty experienced by service providers – too much time spent on the road travelling between farms.

The provider will be able to hold a virtual a face-to-face conversation, but with the added ability to easily and effectively manipulate large, two-way data files and other information on the farmer's monitor screen.

Connectivity also allows big businesses to set up in small towns and in the farm context to obtain farm management advice and technology services, along with community regeneration and retention of local skills.

NBN-enabled farming also offers the means to achieve improved environmental outcomes through highly efficient use of resources, as spatially-enabled technologies can reduce the water and carbon footprint of farming.

All of this will feed into the new digital economy of the future, enhancing not only the wellbeing of farmers, but many communities across regional and rural Australia.

And by increasing our national productivity in this way, an NBN-enabled agricultural sector stands to benefit the entire nation.

- Dr Helen Thompson is Director of the Centre for eCommerce and Communications at University of Ballarat

> What the NBN offers is a connected farm, safer and healthier, as a 'command centre' – a network of soil, plant, weather, machinery and asset sensors streaming intelligence into the farmhouse via information service providers located anywhere in Australia.
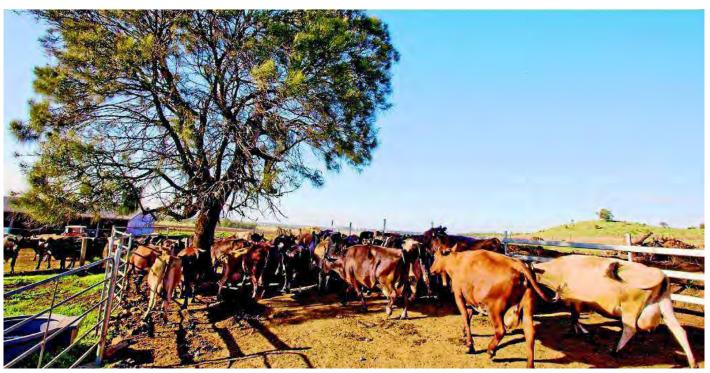
TECHNOLOGY: The National Broadband Network will help farming communities cope better with the effects of future weather on Australia's rural landscape

The
benefits
of broadband

Our imagination is the only limit on the potential of broadband to revolutionise healthcare, says Prof John Wilson.

The potential of what our digital future holds for industry — and in the health sector — was demonstrated very effectively at the launch of a state-of-the-art broadband network test-bed laboratory in Melbourne in September.

An impressive array of futuristic health applications powered by the National Broadband Network (NBN) was showcased at the launch by IBES, the Institute for a Broadband-enabled Society, at the University of Melbourne.

University initiatives such as IBES are essential incubators for the development of these opportunities — fundamental building blocks of the eHealth industry — to the point where they become essential for the highest standards of healthcare.

High-capacity broadband will deliver greater speed, better access, as well as the ability for multiple users to participate in these applications.

Why broadband?

Such advances spring from the clinical necessity to overcome distances that hamper rural and remote communities; the skills shortage; and the ageing demographic.

For example, the Tele-stroke program allows neurologists to remotely assess CT scans of patients suspected of suffering acute stroke and enables early treatment with subsequent reduction in disability for the 48,000 Australians who suffer stroke each year. Thus greater immediacy can occur remotely through broadband in that vital 'golden hour' after someone has suffered a stroke.

An ageing population, increasing rates of chronic disease and a shortage of health professionals are all expected to put significant pressure on Australia's healthcare systems and budgets in coming years.

Online consultations and training

IBES aims to reduce social isolation through the use of Internet strategies that aim to deliver appropriate skill and clinical information to those needing healthcare in a 'patient-centred' model.

To enhance the skill base of the population and healthcare workers, IBES has developed the UniTV platform to enable shared learning and virtual workspaces. This project has enormous potential for the training and skill development of healthcare workers and the public alike, and has received a Global Business Telecommunications award for innovation.

Solutions such as this will become increasingly important for training, credentialing and recertification of the healthcare workforce in the coming years.

Given the concentration of resources in capital cities, the vast distances across our country and rapid advances occurring in healthcare, the valuable work of IBES and centres like it will ultimately be seen as visionary.

While many more initiatives are yet to flow from IBES, it has provided another example of where universities are capable of providing leadership and direction for the use of new technology. ♥

Professor John Wilson is with the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University

Question No: 513

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: NBN Champions

Senator Birmingham asked:
1. One of the DBCDE's NBN champions is Dr Simes, a former economic adviser to Prime Minister Keating currently employed by Deloitte Access Economics.

2. Did Dr Simes prepare and/or contribute to any of the broadband-related or NBN-related material the DBCDE has published or made available since November 2007? Was Deloitte Access Economics financially remunerated for this work? Was Dr Simes remunerated for this work?

3. If so, what remuneration did Deloitte Access Economics and/or Dr Simes and Access receive?

4. Have Deloitte Access Economics and/or Dr Simes undertaken any work for NBN Co? Or for any other agency within the portfolio since November 2007?

5. Does DBCDE see any conflict between being paid for NBN-related work and being a supposedly self-selected and objective "champion" for FTTP and the NBN?

6. Did Dr Simes prepare or contribute to the Access Deloitte report for the Victorian Government cited effusively by Senator Conroy as supporting the NBN?

7. Are there any other NBN Champions who have received any direct remuneration from the Department and/or NBN Co (assuming Dr Simes and Access did) for research, consulting or other services? If so, who and what were the arrangements and cost?

8. What is DBCDE's estimate of the total cost of the NBN Champions program since inception?

9. Please provide copies of all communications from DBCDE to NBN Champions.

Answer:
1. See 2.

2. Yes – Dr Simes was a contributor to:

- Impacts of teleworking under the NBN report (2010)
- Telework Literature Review (2011)
- Development of Telework Business Case Toolkit (2011)
- APS Telework Toolkit 2012 (2012)

- Update to 2010 Telework Report (2012)
- Short Form Telework Savings Tool (2012)
- Telework ROI Calculator (2012)
- Creating jobs through NBN-enabled telework report (2012)

Yes – Deloitte Access Economics was financially remunerated.
The Department does not have any information regarding Dr Simes' remuneration.

3. Deloitte Access Economics received $128,947.10 (GST exclusive) for these reports. The Department does not have any information regarding Dr Simes' remuneration.

4. The Department does not have this information.

5. No. Deloitte Access Economics, not Dr Simes, were contracted to provide the report.

6. The Department is aware of the report "Telecommunications Spend and Demand in Victoria, 2012", commissioned by the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation from Deloitte Access Economics. The Department, however, does not have access to the names of the individual consultants used to prepare the report.

7. No. Broadband Champions do not receive any remuneration from the Department.

8. The Budget for the Champions Program for the financial years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 is $360,000

9. Information is provided to Broadband Champions on a regular basis via email only. These emails include: updates on the NBN rollout; Departmental programs; upcoming announcements; events and speaking opportunities; and information on activities undertaken by fellow Champions. The provision of all communications from DBCDE to NBN Champions would be an onerous and unreasonable diversion of staff resources from Departmental business.

Question No: 514

Program No. Corporate and Business

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: NBN Champions information packs

Senator Birmingham asked:
What is the precise content of the NBN information packs being provided to NBN advocates? Can a copy be provided to the Committee?

Answer:
The Broadband Champions have not been provided with NBN Information Packs. The Champions are provided with information regularly via email updates from the Department. These emails include: updates on the NBN rollout; Departmental programs; upcoming announcements; events and speaking opportunities; and information on activities undertaken by fellow Champions.