**Question No: 47**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**


**Topic: YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP (YAG)**

**Senator Bushby asked:**

Of the 305 young Australians announced as members of the Youth Advisory Group, how many of these have completed consent forms to gain access to YAG Online Site?

How many queries or suggestions have been submitted through the online site since it was launched?

Have any meetings at individual schools been scheduled, if so, which states and schools will these meetings take place at?

Have members of the Youth Advisory Group provided comments or suggestions regarding compulsory ISP-level Internet filtering and their understanding of how to bypass such measures?


**Answer:**

As at 30 June 2009, there are 303 members of the Youth Advisory Group. A pre-requisite for membership is the signed agreement by students and their primary carers to the *Terms and Conditions for Participation* and the *y@g Online Acceptable Use Policy*.

As at 30 June, over 6,500 posts were made to the *y@g Online* website, some 3,000 of these to the Cyber-Safety forum.

Meetings at all 15 schools are scheduled to take place between 9 June and 20 July 2009. As at 30 June, Ipswich Grammar School (Qld), Ascham School (NSW), St. Joseph's College (Qld), Sanderson Middle School (NT), The Heights School (SA), Wonthaggi Secondary College (VIC), Caroline Springs College (VIC), Rose Bay High School (Tas), Monaro High School (NSW), Redcliffe State High School (Qld), Telopea Park School (ACT), Narembeen District High School (WA), Cabramatta High School (NSW) and John XXIII College (WA) have been visited. The final school, St Bede's College (Vic) is scheduled to be visited in July 2009.

Some Youth Advisory Group members have commented on ISP-level internet filtering or bypassing such measures.

**Question No: 48**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref:** ECA9

**Topic: Australian Communications Consumer Action Network**

**Senator Lundy asked:**

1. What new applications will become available in a ubiquitous high-bandwidth network?
2. What are the policy plans to ensure people with disabilities in that high-bandwidth network are supported?

**Answer:**

A ubiquitous high bandwidth network will support a diverse range of existing and new Internet based applications. At an overarching level, these applications could be categorised into three segments, based on their intended end-use as listed below.

In addition, recent data indicates that people with broadband Internet tend to access audio and video more than those with dial up Internet access, so we can expect demand for audio and video to increase with access to ubiquitous high-bandwidth networks.[1]

1) Information oriented applications

These applications include ubiquitous email, instant messaging (IM) and news websites and portals.

Interactive Web 2.0 applications, such as social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter), blogging websites and other online forums which enable end users to share information in real time are also likely to proliferate.

Internet Protocol (IP) based voice applications, such as Voice over IP (e.g. Skype, Google Voice) are also likely to continue their growth in the future.

Although information oriented applications can be relatively less bandwidth intensive, high bandwidth will provide the opportunity to use these applications in new and innovative ways.

2) Entertainment oriented applications

Examples of these entertainment oriented applications include:

- Internet Protocol Television or IPTV (e.g. the TPG IPTV service);

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[1] Australian Communications and Media Authority, *Telecommunications Today, Report 6: Internet activity and content*, September 2008 (page 17)

- Internet TV or streaming video (e.g. YouTube);
- Video on Demand or VoD (e.g. hulu.com, ABC iView);
- Massively Multiplayer Online Games or MMOGs (e.g. World of Warcraft);
- Virtual world applications (e.g. Second Life);
- Peer-to-peer file sharing;
- Online music stores (e.g. Apple iTunes, Bandit.fm); and
- Online DVD and movie stores (e.g. BigPond Movies).

These applications are currently available; however, it is expected that with the availability of a ubiquitous high bandwidth network, such as the National Broadband Network, the proliferation and quality of service (QoS) of these applications will increase.

It is also expected that with the relatively affordable availability of Internet delivered video applications, new broadcast business models will replace legacy ones. Entertainment oriented applications tend to be more bandwidth intensive due to the video content that they contain.

3)  Business/consumer oriented applications

Business applications include e-commerce websites (e.g. eBay, Alibaba, Wotif), high definition, or HD, video conferencing applications, telework and telepresence applications, digital animation and game design applications.

Industry has indicated[2] that having access to high bandwidth networks makes possible the opportunity to have distributed workplaces, which can improve employment opportunities. Industry has also indicated that access to high bandwidth networks can enable new business models, for example, games developers can deliver updates and products online rather than via CD sales. High bandwidth also enables games developers to be more creative in developing digital visual effects.

In addition, geographically distributed specialists medical professionals will be able to share and examine high-bandwidth x-rays and scans and other medical imagery to improve rural health service delivery.

For consumers, applications that enable the online delivery of social services, such as health, education and e-government, are likely to be facilitated by a high speed broadband network. Examples include telemedicine (i.e. remote medical diagnosis and specialist consultation), distant education (i.e. online open universities, online classrooms and lecture podcasts) and a variety of e-government services (i.e. online filing of tax returns, regulatory information and electronic health records).

Access to high bandwidth networks is also likely to facilitate the growth and use of smart technologies and sensor networks. Smart technologies, such as intelligent transport systems,

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[2] Sourced from Animal Logic, which is a digital visual effects company that started working on commercials, has since diversified into animated feature films and is planning a move into digital games (refer www.animallogic.com)

or ITS, use sensors to monitor and optimise traffic flows and enable better traffic management.

A high speed network is also likely to improve the potential and capacity of networked IP enabled devices and facilitate machine-to-machine (M2M) communications. This is also referred to as the 'Internet of Things'.

Some applications like telemedicine and HD video conferencing tend to be more bandwidth intensive due to the transmission of high resolution images and video content.

2. The Department's forward-looking agenda for people with disabilities is detailed in its answer to Question 55.

Policies are directed at ensuring that evolving digital services are accessible to all users and help to ensure social inclusion. With regard to specific issues of accessibility, affordability and equality for people with disabilities, policy options that are currently being evaluated include  accessible broadband, content accessibility, access to assistive equipment, SMS access to emergency services, captioned telephony and video relay services. In recognition of the clear potential  access to broadband  has to improve the lives of disadvantaged consumers, this policy development is being undertaken in conjunction with industry and consumer and community advocates.

The Government anticipates that the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network will also provide support to people with disabilities through its educational and outreach roles.

**Question No: 49**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 43**

**Topic: NICTA research labs**

**Senator Lundy asked:**

**Which universities have contributed to the development of the research labs?**

**Answer:**

As at 11 June 2009, seven universities have contributed, and are continuing to contribute, to the development of National ICT Australia's research laboratories. They are the Australian National University, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, the University of Melbourne, the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland and the University of Sydney.

**Question No: 50**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref:** ECA 113

**Topic: Digital Regions Initiative**

**Senator Lundy asked:**

I want to ask some questions about the Digital Regions Initiative.  It does relate back to the NBN. Can you tell us how this initiative works?

**Answer:**

The Digital Regions Initiative is a 4 year $60 million initiative that will co-fund innovative digital applications to improve services in the key sectors of education, health and emergency services in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia in partnership with state, territory and local governments.

State, territory and local governments seeking funding under the Digital Regions Initiative will be required to provide matching funding.

Expressions of Interest for the first funding round will be called in the second half of 2009. Applications will undergo a rigorous selection process. Projects that meet the selection criteria to the highest degree will be offered the opportunity to enter negotiations to secure funding.

Projects will be expected to commence in early 2010.

Draft guidelines for the Digital Regions Initiative were released by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy for comment on 15 June 2009 and are available at www.dbcde.gov.au/digitalregions.

**Question No: 51**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 28**

**Topic: BUDGET FOR CYBER-SAFETY**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

What is the budget for cyber-safety in 2009-10, including the ISP filtering component?

**Answer:**

The total budget (departmental and administered) for all elements of the Government's cyber-safety plan is $51.635 million for 2009-10.

**Question No: 52**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 30**

**Topic: ISP FILTERING PILOT - EXPENDITURE**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What is the expenditure for the ISP filtering pilot?

**Answer:**

Total expenses in relation to the internet service provider (ISP) content filtering pilot to 30 June 2009 is $607,516.54 (excl. GST).

This figure comprises the amounts outlined below:

- Total payments made to participating ISPs: $269,708.84.
- Total expenses for Enex TestLab**:** $336,007.70.
- An advertisement in *CommsDay* in relation to the pilot: $1,800.00.

**Question No: 53**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 32**

**Topic: ISP FILTERING PILOT – CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION**

**Senator Ludlum asked:**

How many customers are participating in the ISP filtering pilot?

**Answer:**

Eight of the nine ISPs in the pilot have provided their customers with the choice of receiving a filtered service, and one ISP, Webshield already provides its customers with filtering as part of its standard service.

ISPs have indicated a preference that the specific number of their customers involved in the pilot not be released publicly.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2009**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 54**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 34 & ECA 40**

**Topic: ISP FILTERING – IMPLEMENTATION POLICY**

**Senator Ludlam and Minchin asked:**

Is legislation required to implement ISP filtering of the refused classification material on the Australian Communications and Media Authority blacklist?

**Answer:**

The implementation of the Government's internet service provider (ISP) filtering policy, including any legislation required to give effect to the policy, will be considered after completion of the current ISP content filtering pilot.

**Question No: 55**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref:** ECA9

**Topic: Australian Communications Consumer Action Network**

**Senator Lundy asked:**

What is the Department's forward-looking agenda for people with disabilities?

**Answer:**

On 16 February, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy announced a feasibility study into a Disability Equipment Program independent of carriers. This study, which is currently underway, will result in a report for the Minister's consideration by the end of 2009.

In addition, from 1 July 2009, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) will commence operation as the peak communications consumer organisation. ACCAN will develop and advocate coordinated positions on the telecommunications needs of consumers, including people with disabilities, to both industry and government.

A key element of ACCAN's structure will be an Expert Advisory Committee on disability issues, which will inform ACCAN's operational agenda, including its research.

One of ACCAN's key roles will be to provide an information portal and advice for consumers, including people with disabilities, about their consumer rights and how to achieve satisfactory product and service outcomes. ACCAN will disseminate information to consumers via web resources and publications. It is anticipated that ACCAN will recruit, train and provide ongoing support to volunteer consumer advocates to outreach into the community.

**Question No: 56**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 12**

**Topic: Section 593 grants payments**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

When did the previous program terminate?

When were the last grants made?

Were grants paid in the financial year 2008-2009?

To whom were the grants paid and of what size?

**Answer:**

The Telecommunications Consumer Representation and Research Program has been renamed the Consumer Representation Grants Program with effect from 2009-2010. In 2008-2009, seventeen organisations received funding to undertake a range of consumer representation activities, either through representational projects or through participation in the Communications Alliance Consumer Council or Communications Alliance Disability Council. The Table below details the type and amount of grant (ex GST) each organisation received.

| Consumer Organisation | Consumer Representation | Sitting Fees For Communications Alliance Consumer Council | Sitting Fees For Communications Alliance Disability Council |
|---|---|---|---|
| Australian Federation of Disability Organisations | | | $1,965.00 |
| Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (TEDICORE Project) | $102,000.00 | | $1,965.00 |
| Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technologies Association | | | $1,965.00 |
| Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association | | $1,572.00 | |
| Blind Citizens Australia | | | $1,965.00 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communication Aid Users Association | $39,000.00 | | |
| Communications Law Centre | | $1,572.00 | |
| Consumers' Telecommunications Network | $280,000.00 | $2,800.00 | |
| Country Women's Association | | $1,572.00 | |
| Deaf Australia Inc | $48,000.00 | | $1,965.00 |
| Deafness Forum of Australia | $47,600.00 | | $1,965.00 |
| Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council | | $1,572.00 | |
| Internet Society of Australia | $25,100.00 | $1,572.00 | |
| National Council on Intellectual Disability | | | $1,965.00 |
| Small Enterprise Telecommunications Centre Limited | $63,500.00 | $1,572.00 | |
| Telecommunications Consumer Group SA Inc | | $1,572.00 | |
| Women with Disabilities Australia | $11,400.00 | | $3,500.00 |
| **TOTAL** | **$616,600** | **$13,804** | **$17,255** |

Communications Alliance cancelled the scheduled Consumer Council and Disability Council meetings for May 2009 and $7,295 is being refunded by the 16 eligible sitting fee recipients.

**Question No: 57**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

In the Budget the ABG is to be reduced by $23.1 million over the next two years; how many people who were previously eligible are no longer as a result of the Optus decision?

What role do you see the ABG playing into the future?

Under this NBN proposal what will be considered metro equivalency, will it be 100 megabits per second or 12 megabits?

You couldn't possibly argue that 12 megabits is equivalent to users in the city getting 100 megabits?

Will you be providing an ABG subsidy to rural and regional users above and beyond the cost of using the NBN to recognise the fact they will not be getting a metro equivalent service?

**Answer:**
As set out in the Department's 2009-10 Portfolio Budget Statement, the Australian Government has reduced the funding allocation to the Australian Broadband Guarantee by $23.1 million over the next *three* financial years.

Premises that can access a commercial metro-comparable broadband service are not eligible for assistance under the Australian Broadband Guarantee. The revised funding allocation took into account a range of market factors including the anticipated reduction in demand for program services as a result of the continuing roll-out of metro-comparable commercial services by Optus and other providers. As the Optus 3G deployment is only one factor in a dynamic market, it is not possible to identify specifically the number of premises previously identified as eligible under the Australian Broadband Guarantee that would fall within coverage of Optus' 3G broadband service.

As the Optus 3G service is primarily designed as a voice service, only a relatively small portion of those premises within the nominal Optus 3G coverage footprint are able to access an Optus 3G broadband service equivalent to a fixed broadband service. However, it is important to note that customers who cannot access a commercial metro-comparable broadband service such as an Optus 3G broadband service, even though their premises are in the nominal coverage area, remain eligible to receive an ABG service, subject to meeting other eligibility criteria.
The Department will continue to closely monitor demand and market developments that may impact on the program during the budget cycle.

As set out in the Department's 2009-10 Portfolio Budget Statement, the Australian Broadband Guarantee will complement the National Broadband Network by subsiding access to metro-comparable broadband services where not otherwise available while the new network is rolled out. The Australian Government has provided funding for the Australian Broadband Guarantee until June 2012.

The definition of a metro-comparable service has always been reviewed on a regular basis and will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis while the Australian Broadband Guarantee is in operation.

The Australian Broadband Guarantee has a total Funding Allocation of $250.8 million (Departmental and Administered) until 2012. The nature of the Australian Broadband Guarantee program and the extent to which it is required after 2012 will be reviewed in due course.

**Question No: 58**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 20**

**Topic: AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**
How many connections have been subsidised to date this financial year?

**Answer:**
36,671 connections have been subsidised this financial year (1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009).

**Question No: 59**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 21**

**Topic: AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE**

**Senator Minchin asked:**
Perhaps if I take your question on how the (Broadband Service) Locator works on notice.

**Answer:**
The Broadband Service Locator is a free online tool to help users find broadband services, in particular metro-comparable services, which may be available where they live or operate their small business.

The Broadband Service Locator is found at http://bcoms.dbcde.gov.au/BSL.  Users of the site may call a freecall number (1800 833 488) for assistance if required.

Users enter their addresses at the prompts.  The Broadband Service Locator is capable of resolving locations from standard addressing as well as lot numbers, block and section numbers, RMB addresses, rural homestead names as well as providing a facility for users with global positioning system (GPS) coordinates to enter those.

The Broadband Service Locator will attempt to match the address supplied and will respond with either a map showing the address identified, or if no direct match can be made, a selection of addresses from which the user can select their location. The user can accept the location shown on the maps or can move the pointer to the correct location of their premises – useful for accuracy on large rural blocks with partial coverage by wireless services for example.  In each case the BSL records the address entered by the user, the original point location and any movement of the point by the user including for audit purposes.

The user is then presented with the results of a geospatial search for service providers that the Department estimates are likely to be able to provide coverage at the nominated address.  The providers are displayed in categories – Category A for commercial providers of metro-comparable broadband services and for which no subsidy is available, Categories B, C and D for the various types of ABG-subsidised service (terrestrial, terrestrial upgrade and satellite) and 'Other' providers.  Other providers offer services which do not meet the ABG-specified metro-comparable thresholds but which may nevertheless be of interest to the user.

Where the BSL finds that an address falls inside mapped coverage for Category A services, then the BSL will list the commercial choices the customer potentially has, but will not display ABG services as being available.  It will also list 'Other' providers.

Where a user's address falls in an area outside of known commercial coverage, ABG category services will be listed, as will 'Other' services.

Users are advised to contact commercial service providers, if any, in the first instance to determine whether such a service is actually able to be connected to their premises, in which case the customer is not generally eligible for a subsidised service.

Users may wish to have the list of providers shown by the BSL mailed to them and can proceed to a registration form on the BSL. The BSL seeks brief information for a pre-eligibility process in the event that the user seeks an ABG service. Slightly different information is sought from individuals, small businesses and Indigenous Community Councils and the user is asked to nominate as one of these three user types. Completion of this registration form serves two purposes:

- It allows an information kit to be sent directly to the user containing information about the choice of services available to them, a series of answers to frequently asked questions including information about their rights when dealing with service providers and a form to be completed if seeking to access an Australian Broadband Guarantee service from a registered provider.
- It provides, on the letter and the form, a unique identification number which is used to track and process claims and customer enquiries.

The content of the information packs supplied reflects the category of services identified by the BSL as being available to the user.

Customers are required to contact all the listed commercial providers for this purpose. Where the BSL reports the availability of ADSL services, customers must check with at least two of the many ADSL providers typically listed separately.

Where a customer finds that the commercial service providers they are advised to contact cannot connect a metro-comparable service for any reason, they can inform the Department of this outcome either by calling the Department's 1800 883 488 freecall number or by visiting the ABG Customer Confirmation Page at https://bcoms.dbcde.gov.au/BSL/admin.do .

On that page they can enter their unique customer ID and enter details of the contacts they have made with the commercial service providers and the results of their enquiries.

Depending on the circumstances at each given address, customers will then be provided with information about the next available category of service available to them. It may be that in the absence of a commercial metro-comparable service the only alternative metro-comparable broadband service is an ABG-registered satellite service and customers will be notified accordingly. However where a terrestrial ABG service is available, customers will be referred to the provider of those services in the first instance.

On occasion, a customer may report that they have contacted a provider and assert that the provider is unable to supply a service. In all cases, participating providers are notified of relevant customer claims about the provider's responses and are offered an opportunity to comment. The Department endeavors to resolve these conflicts in a timely manner in order that customers are connected to an appropriate service as soon as practicable.

# Australian Government
## Australian Broadband Guarantee

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *A brief overview of the Australian Broadband Guarantee*

### 1. What does the Australian Broadband Guarantee program offer?

The Australian Broadband Guarantee provides incentive payments to registered internet service providers to supply subsidised broadband services to eligible residential and small business consumers as well as and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community Councils, where commercial broadband services of a

'metro-comparable' standard are not available.

Consumers can determine their eligibility for assistance under the Australian Broadband Guarantee by checking on the Department's Broadband Service Locator, asking their preferred registered Australian Broadband Guarantee provider, or calling the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline on 1800 883 488.

### 2. What does 'metro-comparable' mean?

'Metro-comparable' is the standard applied by the Department to assess whether commercial broadband services broadly compare to broadband services widely taken up in metropolitan areas. The standard is applied against service speed, download limits and price. To meet the current metro-comparable standard, commercial broadband services must offer:

- speeds of at least 512 Kbps download and 128 Kbps upload

- at least 3 GB monthly download limits, and

- a price of no more than $2500 (including GST) over a three year period, including all connection and equipment cost.

### 3. How does the Australian Broadband Guarantee work?

Under the Australian Broadband Guarantee, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) apply to register themselves, their services, and the areas in which they propose to operate. Once registered, they can then offer their registered services to eligible premises (those premises without metro-comparable service access) in their service area.

Registered Australian Broadband Guarantee services must comply with the metro-comparability standard and must also provide a number of other protections for consumers. They are paid for each registered service that is provided to eligible premises.

Consumers can find out whether their premises is eligible to receive an Australian Broadband Guarantee subsidised service by checking on the Department's Broadband Service Locator (available at *www.dbcde.gov.au/bsl*), asking their preferred registered Australian Broadband Guarantee provider or calling the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline on 1800 883 488.

## 4.  What is the Broadband Service Locator and how does it work?

The Broadband Service Locator is an online system on the Department's website that identifies what broadband services, both commercial and subsidised Australian Broadband Guarantee services, are available to premises throughout Australia.

The Broadband Service Locator will inform consumers who enter their address whether a commercial metro-comparable broadband service is available to that address. Such services are called Category A services on the Broadband Service Locator, and premises are not eligible to receive a subsidised Australian Broadband Guarantee service if they can get a Category A service.

The Broadband Service Locator also enables consumers to register their details in order to receive an information pack, and potentially to apply for an Australian Broadband Guarantee service if they are eligible.

### *How do I find out whether I can get a commercial metro-comparable broadband service (Category A service)?*

## 5.  What will the Broadband Service Locator tell me?

Once you enter your address details, the Broadband Service Locator will inform you whether one or more Category A services are available to your address. You can then choose which of these services you wish to take and approach your chosen commercial provider.

## 6.  What if the Broadband Service Locator tells me an ADSL service is available to me?

If the Broadband Service Locator shows that an ADSL service is available to your address you have a wide choice of ADSL providers to choose from. The Broadband Service Locator provides details of all these ADSL providers.

## 7.  What if a provider of Category A commercial services can't actually provide me with a service?

When you go to your chosen provider of Category A services, it may be that the identified broadband service is not actually available. For example, wireless services are sometimes restricted by the surrounding terrain, and ADSL services may be restricted by certain technical constraints (such as distance from the exchange or pair gain systems).

You must make reasonable enquiries and gather reasonable evidence to show that no Category A services are available to your address before you can get an Australian Broadband Guarantee service. This means that you must check all Category A services that are identified as possibly available to your address on the Broadband Service Locator.

## 8.  What if the provider of commercial Category A services won't respond to my enquiry?

The Department only requires you to make a reasonable attempt to contact identified providers of Category A services. If the provider you have contacted does not give you a clear answer within seven days as to whether they can offer you a service, then you need make no further enquiry of this provider. Further, the Department does not consider it reasonable for providers of Category A services to charge customers to ascertain whether they can offer them a service.

## 9.  What evidence do I need to gather to show the Australian Broadband Guarantee program that a Category A service is not available?

In order for you to apply for an Australian Broadband Guarantee service, you must provide reasonable evidence that any Category A service that is identified as being available to your address is in fact not available, or that you are not able to find out the availability of the service after having made reasonable enquiry.

This means that you should record information about

- when you enquired about the availability of the service

- who you spoke to

- what the response was and when it was provided, and

- if you could not get a response after reasonable enquiry, the circumstances that occurred.

Written evidence is preferred but is not essential.

## *I can't get a commercial metro-comparable service. How do I get an Australian Broadband Guarantee service?*

### 10. How do I register for an Australian Broadband Guarantee service?

Once you have determined that Category A services are not available at your premises, you can register for an Australian Broadband Guarantee service in any one of three ways:

- You can register your details yourself on the Broadband Service Locator (*http://bcoms.dbcde.gov.au/BSL*). This site provides step-by-step instructions on what you must do to register for a service

- You can approach your preferred Australian Broadband Guarantee provider to register your details on your behalf, or

- You can call the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline on 1800 883 488 and one of the Department's consumer support officers can assist you to register your details.

### 11. How do I find a registered Australian Broadband Guarantee provider who can provide me with a service?

In circumstances where it is determined that a Category A service is not available at your premises, the Department will send you an information pack containing a list of the registered providers that are able to supply you with an Australian Broadband Guarantee Service. This list will reflect the information about services to your premises available on the Broadband Service Locator.

### 12. What are Categories B, C and D in the Australian Broadband Guarantee program?

Internet Service Providers that offer Category B, C and D services are registered with the Australian Broadband Guarantee program and receive incentive payments to provide eligible customers with subsidised broadband services. The different categories reflect the different priorities the program places on different registered services.

**Category B services** are registered broadband services that are delivered by ground-based networks, such as ADSL, cable-type services and wireless services. A Category B Service may be available to customers unable to obtain a Category A service.

**Category C Services** are registered broadband services that are made available through either upgrading a service provided under a predecessor program to a metro-comparable broadband service standard or upgrading an existing commercial service to a metro-comparable broadband service standard. A Category C service may be available to customers unable to obtain a Category A or B service.

**Category D Services** are registered satellite broadband services. A Category D service is available to customers unable to obtain a Category A, Category B or Category C service.

## 13. What kinds of services are available under the Australian Broadband Guarantee?

All providers are required to offer at least one 'threshold' level registered service and one 'added value' registered service to consumers under the Australian Broadband Guarantee. Providers may also offer 'entry' level registered services.

Threshold services have peak download/upload data speeds of at least 512/128 Kbps and at least 3GB per month usage allowance at a price over three years of no more that $2500 (GST inclusive).

Added value services have peak download/upload data speeds of at least 1024/256 Kbps and at least 5GB per month usage allowance. There is no price restriction on 'added value' services, but providers have to demonstrate to the Department that the prices reasonably reflect the cost of providing these services.

'Entry level' services have peak download/upload data speeds of at least 256/64 Kbps and at least 500 MB per month usage allowance.

## 14. What is the Declaration form?

The Department sends a Declaration Form to all customers that register for an Australian Broadband Guarantee service. Customers must complete the Declaration Form before they can receive a service. In completing the form, customers declare that they meet the eligibility requirements for assistance under the program and that they cannot receive a Category A service at their premises from a commercial ISP.

## 15. How soon can I be connected with an Australian Broadband Guarantee service?

Once you have signed a contract with your chosen provider, you should receive a working service within 30 calendar days. You may negotiate a longer connection time frame with your ISP if you wish. If your connection is taking longer than 30 calendar days and you haven't negotiated a longer connection time frame, you can contact the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline on 1800 883 488 to resolve the issue.

## *I have an Australian Broadband Guarantee service. What are my rights under the program?*

## 16. What are my service rights under the program?

There are a large number of protections that all registered providers must offer customers with their registered services. These are:

- Detailed information about the customer contract terms and conditions that apply to your Australian Broadband Guarantee service plan
- Three year offer of service without any increase in the monthly price of the service
- Excess data charges capped at no more than five cents per megabyte
- Independent testing of service speeds and network availability
- Minimum 12 months' warranty period for the Customer Premises Equipment with the option of an extended warranty available at reasonable cost
- Movement between registered services and any commercial services that may be offered
- Free-of-charge help desk support, free-of-charge 24/7 fault reporting and commitments to connection and repair time frames.

## 17. What sort of contract can I expect?

Your contract with your provider will contain core Australian Broadband Guarantee terms and conditions, required standards of service and other consumer protection measures. Providers may add other commercial terms and conditions in their customer contract, provided they are consistent with the Australian Broadband Guarantee Guidelines and comply with all relevant Commonwealth, state, territory and local government legislative requirements, as well as applicable industry codes.

Each provider's standard customer contract, and any changes to the standard customer contract, must be approved by the Department before the provider can offer it to customers.

## 18. Can I change my Australian Broadband Guarantee service?

You may move to a different service plan offered by your registered Australian Broadband Guarantee provider (for example, to a service plan with greater data usage or data speed), subject to the terms and conditions in the customer contract offered by the provider, and subject to paying any additional charges required by the Provider.

Where a provider imposes charges for transfer between service plans, those charges must be reasonable and reflect the administrative cost of transferring customers between service plans. These charges must also be detailed in the provider's customer contract, which must be approved by the Department.

## 19. Can I change to a commercial broadband service?

Your provider may also offer commercial broadband services that are not registered under the Program. If you move to one of these commercial services, the provider has no obligation to provide the same terms and conditions in relation to the service as they offered for the Australian Broadband Guarantee service. You can move back to a registered Australian Broadband Guarantee service at any time over the three year period of the service offer (see below).

## 20. How long is my provider obliged to offer me an Australian Broadband Guarantee service?

Your provider is required to provide the service on the applicable terms and conditions for a period of three years from the date that your Australian Broadband Guarantee service is first connected and supplied.

If you move to a commercial broadband service offered by your Australian Broadband Guarantee provider, you have the right to move back to any registered Australian Broadband Guarantee service plan that your provider offers at any time during the three year period since your Australian Broadband Guarantee service was first connected and supplied.

## 21. If I receive a service through the Australian Broadband Guarantee who will own the equipment (satellite dish/modem)?

Ownership of the equipment will vary from provider to provider and responsibilities for equipment will be detailed in the terms and conditions of a provider's contract. Make sure you are aware of your equipment ownership conditions before connecting with a provider.

## 22. Does the equipment have a warranty?

All registered providers under the Australian Broadband Guarantee offer a minimum of 12 months warranty on equipment, with some providers offering extended warranty at an additional cost.

## 23. What happens after three years?

Providers are encouraged to continue to offer broadband services to consumers after the expiry of the three year Australian Broadband Guarantee service plan period and to maintain the same terms and conditions. However, there is no obligation on them to do so.

If your service provider does not maintain the service at a metro-comparable level at the end of the three-year service plan period, and you do not have access to a metro-comparable broadband service on commercial terms, you may be eligible for a new Australian Broadband Guarantee service. In these circumstances, your current provider could not claim a new incentive payment to connect you to a new Australian Broadband Guarantee service.

## A final reminder

If you have any other questions about the Australian Broadband Guarantee, or would like further detail on any of the information provided here, please call the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline on 1800 883 488.

## Users who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment

Please contact the Australian Broadband Guarantee consumer support helpline through the National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 883 488

- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 883 488

- Internet relay users connect to the NRS (see *www.relayservice.com.au* for details) and then ask for 1800 883 488.

## Translating or interpreting services

People who need assistance with English can telephone 131 450 for the Translating and Interpreting Service National, which offers support for over 120 languages and dialects at any time of the day or night.

**Question No: 60**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA 21**


**Topic: AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE**


**Senator Minchin asked:**

We are about to post up a detailed FAQ, which I am more than happy to provide you on notice as well.


**Answer:**

Please refer to the FAQ attachment.

**Question No: 61**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE**

*I refer to a discussion, Budget Estimates, 26 May 2009, regarding the Australian Broadband Guarantee (ABG) and also the eligibility of residence in Haricot way, Lilydale.*

**Senator Minchin asked:**

Has the Department amended the wording on the ABG Locator in relation to eligibility since this issue was raised in Budget Estimates on 26 May? When did this occur?

Has the Department reduced the coverage status of the Optus 3G Network in Haricot Way, Lilydale, the street provided as an example during the Estimates hearing? If so, when was this done and why?

Have actual field tests been conducted to assess Optus 3G coverage in Haricot Way at any time or in other streets across the country, as the Minister inferred that field test are conducted, when he said trees or other objects could result in some addresses in one street obtaining coverage, while others do not?

Has the department reduced or expanded the coverage of Optus 3G network in other locations across the country since Budget Estimates or at any time since January 2009; please provide details?

**Answer:**

Yes, as foreshadowed at the Estimates hearings, the Department undertook a considered review of the wording appearing on the Broadband Service Locator and agreed that the wording was ambiguous. New wording was developed and posted to the site on or around 28 May 2009.

The Department routinely reviews and amends coverage data underlying the user interface of the Broadband Service Locator in response to new and changing coverage by providers. Following discussions with Optus in January and February 2009 aimed at improving the accuracy of the Broadband Service Locator, the Department has been in regular receipt, approximately weekly, of updated coverage information about Optus' 3G network and has included this data in maintaining the Broadband Service Locator. Optus' 3G coverage data changes to reflect network constraints and remediation and the deployment of new or augmented coverage as the network grows. In the interests of efficient management of the Australian Broadband Guarantee, the Department replaces the previous Optus coverage with the updated coverage shortly after its receipt in order to provide users of the site with current advice that is as accurate as practicable.

In order to assess whether Optus 3G wireless broadband services were metro-comparable for the purposes of the Australian Broadband Guarantee, the Department engaged the services of Enex Test Labs to undertake independent field testing of the availability of Optus 3G services on a representative sample of streets and roads, and inside buildings, in metropolitan, regional and rural areas.  Enex testing was not undertaken specifically in Haricot Way, Lilydale.  Wireless broadband service providers, including those registered with the Australian Broadband Guarantee, frequently undertake on-site testing to determine if a potential customer's premises are able to be connected to a service.  Local obstacles may sometimes prevent adequate signal penetration, precluding the provision of the provider's wireless service at a given address.

**Question No: 62**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA49**

**Topic: PAIR GAIN COMPLAINTS**

**Senator Lundy asked:**

**Could you take on notice providing information about TIO complaints relating to pair gain systems? I still get complaints about people who cannot access ADSL services because of the existence of pair gain systems and the trouble they have getting that resolved. I am interested to follow that up from the TIO's perspective.**

**Answer:**

On receipt of an internet service complaint relating to pair gains technology, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) checks to see if the line is able to provide the minimum speed of 19.2 kbps. The TIO would not generally investigate and would not record as a complaint, if a complainant's pair gain line was providing a minimum speed of 19.2 kbps.

The TIO jurisdiction does not extend to directing a provider to upgrade infrastructure or make other commercial decisions that would increase the speed of an internet service.

People who find that they are unable to access a terrestrial broadband service may be eligible to receive a subsidised service under the Australian Broadband Guarantee. Between August 2008 and July 2009, around 1300 enquiries to the program have been from people whose access to ADSL services is impeded by pair gain systems.

**Question No: 63**

**Program No. All**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: CUTS TO PROGRAM FUNDING**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What programs have been cut in this latest budget?
Please provide a detailed list of the specific programs which have:
1. Been axed
2. Had their funding reduced by more than 10 per cent.

**Answer:**
1. No ongoing programs have been terminated.
2. Programs that have had their funding reduced by more than 10 per cent are the:

- Australian Broadband Guarantee Program – the reduction reflects the greater availability of metro-comparable broadband services to residential and small business premises that now exists, and does not affect the level of financial assistance available to eligible residents or businesses; and

- National Transmission Network – Residual Funding Pool – the reduction reflects the return of uncommitted funding to the Budget. Existing funding assistance for the transmission costs incurred by community broadcasters, Radio for the Print Handicapped, and three remote commercial broadcasters (Golden West Network, Imparja TV and North-West Radio) will continue.

**Question No: 64**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: MINISTERS OFFICE STAFFING**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Please provide the names, salaries, titles and responsibilities of all staff in the Minister's Office.

Please indicate what their salaries were in October 2007 (or when they started) and what their salaries are now.

Please identify which staff has government cars as part of their package. What model vehicles do they drive? What is the cost of the vehicle packages?

Which staff are entitled to fly business class?

What is the home base for each of the staff? If they are not located in the home base of the employing Minister/Parliamentary Secretary or Canberra, what is the reason?

**Answer:**

This information is not held by the Department. Ministerial staff and their arrangements are managed by the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Group in the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

**Question No: 65**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: STAFF TRAINING**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

In relation to both Departmental and Ministerial staff, please provide details of staff training activities undertaken this financial year, and planned for next financial year. Please provide a breakdown of costs, the nature of the training programs run, numbers of staff involved by level of employment and any instances of external consultants being engaged. Where external consultants were engaged, please detail their expertise and the specific deliverables of the program.

**Answer:**

Response relates to departmental staff only.

| 2008-09 financial year | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Core training | Tailored, Department specific skills based programs covering: financial management; APS Values and the Code of Conduct; policy analysis and formulation; indigenous cultural awareness; legal awareness; preparing ministerial correspondence; writing skills and ethical leadership | | |
| | **Programs 2008-09** | **Costs** | **$** |
| | 49 | Printing & ancillary | 6,214 |
| | | External training provider | 255,967 |
| | Total cost for 49 programs in 2008-09 | | 262,181 |
| | Total actual participants as at 25/6/09 is 733 | | |
| | Participants as at 25/6/09: 80 x APS1; 156 x APS2; 19 x APS3; 85 x APS4; 84 x APS5; 143 x APS6; 128 x EL1; 34 x EL2;  4 x SES Note: figures show the total number of course attendees. In particular, APS1 figures represent Year 12 Graduates, APS2 figures represent university Graduates participating in a number of core training programs. | | |

| Capability development | Intensive management development programs for specific classification levels. Programs are between five and seven days duration, depending on level. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Programs 2008-09** | **Costs** | **$** |
| | 7 | Printing & ancillary | 9,810 |
| | | External training provider | 247,235 |
| | | Profile tools | 38,052 |
| | | Venue | 33,279 |
| | | Catering | 28,832 |
| | Total cost for 7 programs in 2008-09 | | 357,208 |
| | Total actual participants 25/6/09 is 125 | | |
| | Participants as at 25/6/09: 6 x APS1; 15 x APS2; 18 x APS5; 22 x APS6; 37 x EL1; 27 x EL2. | | |

| **External APS development** | APSC Leadership and expertise development opportunities, including Career Development Assessment Centres (CDAC), the Leadership Across Borders program and the Treasury sponsored Graduate Diploma in Economics run through Monash University | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Programs 2008-09** | **Total cost for 2008-09** | **Participants 2008-09** |
| | CDAC | 35,250 | 3 x EL2 |
| | Leadership Across Borders | 24,364 | 1 x SES B2 |
| | Treasury Graduate Diploma in Economics
Note: The Graduate Diploma is a two year course at a total cost of $24,000 per person. Actual expenditure in 2008-09 was $12,000; expected future expenditure is $24,000 in 2009-10 and $12,000 in 2010-11. | 12,000 | 1 x APS5; 1 x APS6 |

2009-2010
It is anticipated that a similar level of expenditure and schedule of core training and capability development programs will be provided during 2009-2010.

External consultants
The external consultants engaged for departmental training programs have specific skills and experience in developing and delivering tailored training programs that are relevant to the APS and departmental context.  A number of training programs also require consultants to possess specific subject matter expertise on topics such as current APS legal, financial management and policy requirements.  Capability development programs require external consultants with highly specialised skills in facilitating group and experiential learning techniques.

**Question No: 66**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: PHONE CONFERENCES**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

How many teleconferences have been held by the Minister with overseas events
or conferences over the last year?

What funding has been provided for such teleconferences?

What plans does the government have to commence or increase the use of
teleconferences by the Minister?

How much has been spent on teleconferences over the last year? How much is
planned to be spent over the coming year?

**Answer:**

This information is not held by the Department. The current telephone system configuration does
not enable differentiation between teleconference calls and regular phone calls.

Funding for telecommunications services is consolidated and does not enable differentiation
between teleconference calls and regular calls.

The Minister and the Department recognise the value of teleconferencing and video conferencing
as a way to reducing the need to travel and associated greenhouse gas emissions. It can also
increase productivity by saved travel time. As such, the Department in Canberra and Sydney and
the Minister's Offices in Canberra and Melbourne are equipped with video conferencing facilities.

In February 2009, the Australian Government announced that telepresence technology[1] would be
deployed across 20 Australian Government and state government locations for use in
inter-governmental meetings such as the Council of Australian Governments and Ministerial
Councils. This will lower government travel costs and associated greenhouse emissions by
reducing the need for face-to-face meetings. The use of this technology is being investigaed for
upcoming Online Communications Council (OCC) meetings, and for the Working Groups that
report to the OCC Standing Committee.

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[1] The Hon Lindsay Tanner MP, 'Australian government signs teleconferencing deal with Cisco and Telstra', Media
Release, 27 February 2009 (available at: www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2009/mr_082009.html; last accessed: 25
June 2009).

The Department has recently provided a web cam capability to a range of staff at their desk-top to further save on travel costs and to improve the ability for staff to communicate with their departmental colleagues. This capability will be further expanded as is considered appropriate once the effectiveness of the newly installed technology has been evaluated.

**Question No: 67**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: GRADUATES PROGRAM**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Is the department cutting back on its graduate intake? If so, by how much and when, and how many graduate places are being cut? To what areas in the department would these positions have gone?

Has a date been set for when the program will be re-established?

**Answer:**

No, in 2009 the Department offered 20 Graduate positions with 18 acceptances. In 2010 the Department will again offer 20 positions.

<div align="right">

**Question No: 68**

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**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**


**Topic: HOSPITALITY**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

What is the Department's hospitality spend for 2008-09?  Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

For the Minister's office, please detail total hospitality spend for 2008-09.  Please detail date, location purpose and cost of each event.

**Answer:**

The Department's hospitality spend for 2008/09 to 31 May 2009 is $5486.01.

| Date | Location | Purpose | Cost |
|------|----------|---------|------|
| 23/10/08 | Sydney | Hospitality to representatives of the press, to provide background briefing on digital switchover to key journalists. | $254.00 |
| 30/10/08 | Sydney | Hospitality to representatives of the press, to provide background briefing on digital switchover to key journalists. | $300.00 |
| 29/7/08 | Melbourne | Meeting with Panel of experts and senior officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project | $3816.50 |
| 29/10/08 | Canberra | Dinner with Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications | $550.00 |
| 13/12/08 | Canberra | NBN Taskforce offered drinks to the Panel of Experts and Specialist Advisers at the close of the Proponent presentations | $144.22 |
| 16/1/09 | Canberra | Replenishment of entertainment cabinet for small scale official entertainment | $421.29 |

The Minister's office spend for 2008/09 to 31 May 2009 is $216.00

| Date | Location | Purpose | Cost |
|------|----------|---------|------|
| 15/10/08 | Canberra | Meal with Chair of Regional Telecommunications Independent Review | $216.00 |

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**
**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2009**
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 69**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Minister travelled overseas on official business in 2008-09?

2. If so, where was the travel, what was the purpose and what was the duration?

3. What was the total cost of:
   a)   travel
   b)   accommodation, and
   c)   any other expenses

4. How many Ministerial staff or family accompanied the Minister?

5. For these staff (please outline their position)/family what was the cost of:
   a)   travel
   b)   accommodation, and
   c)   any other expenses

6. How many officers from the Department accompanied the Minister?

7. In relation to these Departmental officers (please outline their position), what was the total cost of:
   a)   travel
   b)   accommodation, and
   c)   any other expenses

8. Were any costs or expenses, as covered above, met by private companies, unions or other organisations? If so, please provide details.

9. Please detail total travel expenses met by the Department. In relation to all departmental travel expenses, please provide estimated resulting carbon emissions. Were any offsets purchased? If so, how many and at what cost?

**Answer:**

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy undertook two trips in 2008-09, one to the United States of America and the United Kingdom and the second to Germany. Details of the Minister's visit to the United States and the United Kingdom were provided in the tabled response to Additional Estimates February 2009 Question 37 which is attached for reference. The Adviser who accompanied the Minister to the United States and the United Kingdom was the Chief of Staff. The Department of Finance and Deregulation have provided the following fully reconciled costs in relation to the Minister's visit to Germany.

Hannover, Germany (28 February – 6 March 2009)

|  | **Airfare** | **Accommodation** | **Travel Allowance/Other** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Minister** | $16,528.68 | $3,881.77 | $104.92 |
| **Adviser – Digital Economy** | $16,525.86 | $1,495.57 | $294.70 |
| **Purpose** | Participate in and attend CeBit, the world's largest information technology expo, to identify the latest technology trends and meet with key German and other Government and industry stakeholders | | |

In the response to Senate Estimates Question 37, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy provided details in relation to the Departmental Officer (SES1) accompanying the Minister to Germany.

In relation to Part 8 of the question, no costs were met by private companies, unions or other organisations.

In relation to Part 9 of the question, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy is unable to estimate carbon emissions resulting from departmental travel. At this stage, the Department does not purchase carbon emission offsets as this matter is to be dealt with at a whole of government level.

**Question No: 70**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: JOURNALS, FILMS, REPORTS AND OTHER RESEARCH MATERIAL**

**Senator Minchin asked:**

(1) Does the Department pay for journals, films, reports and other research material for the Minister's office?

(2) Is there a budget for these types of purchases?

(3) Are you able to provide details of such materials that have been purchased for the Minister's office since December 2007?

(4) Has the Minister's office agreed to purchase a market Clarity Industry Atlas and if so when?

(5) Why is it required?

(6) What does the Department and the Minister's office currently rely upon to know where existing infrastructure is located?

**Answer:**

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Materials purchased since December 2007 are:
  - Fibre in the last Mile report;
  - Odger's Australian Senate Practice;
  - Telecommunications Act
  - Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Services Act
  - Broadcasting Services Act
  - Australian Communications and Media Authority Act
  - Trade Practices Act
  - FOI Act
  - Privacy Act
  - Communication Law and Policy Australia
  - Communication Law and Policy Australia guide cards, updates and bulletins

(4) No.

(5) N/A

(6) The Department and Minister's Office make use of a wide range of sources to know where infrastructure is located. These sources include:
   - information published by the ACMA, ACCC, carriers, commercial information providers and other parties; and
   - such information as is provided confidentially by carriers.

   For the purposes of the 2008 National Broadband Network (NBN) Request for Proposals process, the Department obtained specified information from certain telecommunications carriers under the information gathering powers in Part 27A of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*. Amendments to Part 27A are proposed to be made by the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (National Broadband Network Measures No. 1) Bill 2009. Those amendments would enable the Department to access network information for the purposes of the NBN initiative announced on 7 April 2009. This Bill is currently before the Senate, and has been referred to the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee for inquiry and report by 17 August 2009.

**Question No: 71**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: ECA4**

**Topic: ATTENDANCE AT COMMUNITY CABINET MEETINGS JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2008**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

I just note that between June and September last year there were four community cabinet meetings and you only appear to have made one of them.

**Answer:**

The Minister was not able to attend the Mackay Community Cabinet due to personal family reasons.

The Minister was not able to attend the other two Community Cabinets due to long standing commitments.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2009**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 72**

**Program No. 1.2**

**Hansard Ref: Written**

**Topic: STAFF WITH A DISABILITY**

**Senator Boyce asked:**

**1.** How many people with a disability were employed full-time and how many part-time? What classifications were these staff employed under?

**2.** What percentage of staff in the Department had a disability at March 30, 2008 and March 30, 2009?

**3.** What programs does the Department have to encourage the employment of people with a disability?

**Answer:**

**1.** The Department collects information regarding employees that choose to identify that they have a disability; there is no requirement for employees to disclose this information. The following table shows the number, classification and working arrangements of employees who as at 30 March 2009 had identified as having a disability:

| Classification | Full-time | Part-time | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Graduate | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| APS4 | 2 | 1 | **3** |
| APS5 | 6 | 0 | **6** |
| APS6 | 6 | 0 | **6** |
| EL1 | 3 | 3 | **6** |
| EL2 | 3 | 0 | **3** |
| SESB1 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| **Total** | **22** | **4** | **26** |

**2.** The percentage of employees that identified as having a disability:
   ▪ 30 March 2008 4.3% and
   ▪ 30 March 2009 3.9%.

**3.** The Disability Employment Network (DEN) is on the Department's approved panel of recruitment service providers.

The Department has in draft a plan titled Levelling the playing field for people with a disability 2009-11.  The Plan will provide guidance on the support available to staff with a disability and how this support can be accessed. The plan will be finalised in the second half of 2009.

The plan will encourage staff involved in recruitment activities to view someone with a disability as no different from others.