



Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

Secretary

Helen Williams AO

our reference

Senator Alan Eggleston
Chairman
Senate Standing Committee on
Environment, Communication and the Arts
Suite SG. 106
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Eggleston

During the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Additional Budget Estimates hearings from 12-13 February 2007, Senator Conroy asked a series of questions to the officers from the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. I would like to clarify two responses provided at the hearings.

In relation to my response to questions from Senator Conroy regarding board of directors insurance and whether the Department has such insurance, Mr Rohan Buettel and I responded that the Department does not have insurance for directors of the type generally relevant to a Commonwealth Authorities and Companies (CAC) agency. The Department does, however, have Comcover insurance that covers all staff.

I would also like to clarify a response provided by Mr Simon Bryant in regard to the 60% funding cap for Telstra under the *Broadband Connect* Incentive Program. It was indicated to Senator Conroy that Telstra received 63% of program funds during 2005-2006. This figure was correct at the time it was initially given. However, it did not take into account a further \$7.5 million of Telstra's claims that were disputed by the Department as these funds had not been paid at that stage. The disputed amount was eventually paid by the Department in June 2006, subsequently increasing the percentage of program payments made to Telstra to 68.9%.

It would be appreciated if you could bring the above clarifications to the attention of Committee members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Helen" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Williams".

Helen Williams

5 March 2007

c.c Dr Ian Holland, Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology
and the Arts