

From: Elizabeth Barnett [mailto:elizabeth.barnett@vernet.net.au]
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2009 11:31 AM
To: Kelly, Alison (SEN)
Cc: Tieu, Christina (SEN); Roger Tanton
Subject: Response to Question on Notice
Importance: High

Good morning Alison, please see below VERNet's response to the question on notice taken at the Melbourne hearing on 7 October 2009. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any queries.

The question:

"Can I ask you to take on notice, and confirm with others in your organisation, to what extent you have made your request or suggestion known to the government, and to what extent the government appears to be actively considering that request."

The answer:

"VERNet has had informal discussions with the intercapital REN operator, AARNet Pty Ltd, in relation to VERNet's proposal for dedicated dark fibre pairs being set aside in the NBN for research and education. AARNet has also proposed dark fibre capacity being set aside for research and education in its submission regarding the Regional Backhaul Blackspots initiative. VERNet understands that the South Australian Government's submission to that initiative made a similar suggestion, referencing the South Australian REN, SABRENet. The AICTEC [[Australian Information & Communications Technology | Education Committee](#)] submission also indicates access issues for the sector: fibre must be affordable. For research and education, the fact of an NBN being constructed does not of itself solve capacity or access issues, if that capacity remains unaffordable.

VERNet has not had a response to its own submission and is not aware whether responses have been made to those others.

VERNet has also had some very preliminary, informal discussions with DEST [[DEEWR](#)] in relation to research and education capacity requirements. It has not yet made a formal proposal to DEST, but plans to continue discussions at an appropriate time in the future. VERNet has not had an indication from the Government of whether its NBN request is being actively considered.

VERNet is currently participating in discussions arranged by VERSi [[VeRSI – Victorian e-Research Strategic Initiative](#)] and involving representatives from many stakeholders including the State Government. These meetings are intended to assess broadband capacity planning for research and education in Victoria. It is not yet known whether this initiative will lead to an approach being made to the Commonwealth."

Regards

Elizabeth Barnett
General Counsel

Victorian Education Research Network