

Dear Senators,

I would like to bring to the attention of the enquiry the situation regarding domestic data cabling in Australia. Currently all telecommunications cabling is controlled by way of the Telecommunications Act 1997 by ACMA. The current legislation forbids anyone except licensed cablers to install data cabling either domestically or in commercial premises. The reason given for this is safety and to protect the telecommunications network. At the time of deregulation in the 80s the only domestic telecommunications cabling involved the phone network. The situation now is vastly different especially with the prospect of the NBN. A good proportion of domestic cabling now involves data and connections to the internet. Currently home owners are not permitted to install their own data cabling despite the fact that they are permitted to install any other types of very low voltage cabling. This situation does NOT exist in any other country, in fact many other countries (NZ, UK, Netherlands, US) they allow homeowners to install their own electricity supply wiring. I see this as a hinderence to the roll out of the NBN. The reason being that almost all commercial cablers refuse to do domestic work so that there will be with the NBN rollout a huge backlog of installations for private households, the main target of this initiative. Some cablers may argue that allowing homeowners to install data cabling themselves will result in safety issues. This is not born out by the facts. In countries where this is allowed (ALL other countries) there is no evidence of safety issues arising, in fact in those that allow DIY electrical installations they have lower rates of electrical injury than Australia. I ask that the committee consider the issue of the current cabling regulations with respect to the overall efficiency of the NBN rollout. Thank you for reading my submission.

Regards
Richard Hockey