

TO THE BROADBAND COMMITTEE,

THANKYOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE MY INPUT INTO THE INQUIRY AGAIN AS FROM MY PREVIOUS SUBMISSION THROUGH THE TORRES SHIRE COUNCIL ON THURSDAY ISLAND, TORRES STRAIT, NORTH QLD.

HERE ARE FEW POINTS OF CONSIDERATION.

1. SINCE TELSTRA CAME UNSTUCK IN PLAYING HARDBALL WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THEY HAVE NOW BEEN ENGAGING IN A BIG SALES PUSH TO GET EVERYONE ONTO THE TELSTRA .NET BUSINESS BROADBAND, USING A NEW MODEM, ADDED WEB FEATURES, AND THE LOSS OF THE EXISTING EMAIL ADDRESSES IF AN EXTRA FEE PER MONTH IS NOT PAYED. I HAVE SEEN SPEEDS UP TO 20 MEG DOWNLOAD, USING THE SAME EXCHANGE EQUIPMENT THAT HAS BEEN THERE FOR A WHILE. THEY HAVE DELIBERATLY KEPT THE SPEEDS LOW PREVIOUSLY, EXPECTING TO GET THE BILLIONS OF GOVERNMENT MONEY AND THEN JUST TURN THE SPEEDS UP AND LIVEN UP THE REDUNDANT FIBRES ALLREADY ACROSS MOST OF AUSTRALIA LINKING ALL THE TELSTRA EXCHANGES AND RADIO SYSTEMS. THEY ARE TRYING TO LOCK UP MAINLY BUSINESS CUSTOMERS TO THEIR SYSTEM, BEFORE THE INEVITABLE COMPETITION ARRIVES, MAKING IT HARDER FOR CUSTOMERS TO SWITCH OVER, AND CHANGING THEIR SITE AND EMAILS FOR A THIRD TIME. WE HAVE TO HAVE A TRULY INDEPENDENT BROADBAND NETWORK, THAT EVEN TELSTRA ITSELF CAN BUY CAPACITY OFF IN THEIR BLACKSPOT AREAS, IF AUSTRALIA IS TO MEET OUR FUTURE HEAD ON. JUST LOOK AT THE BROADBAND AND MOBILE SERVICES OUR MAJOR ASIAN AND INDIAN TRADING PARTNERS HAVE, AND THEY ARE ECONOMICALLY BREATHING DOWN OUR NECKS.
2. IN THE AREA OF CAPE YORK PENINSULA AND TORRES STRAIT NORTH OF CAIRNS, TELSTRA HAS THE MONOPOLY ON FIBRE AND THE BEST RADIO TOWER SITES. IT WILL COST A HUGH AMOUNT TO DUPLICATE THOSE ASSETTS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE CRITICAL IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS IN OUR REMOTE AREA, COVERING VAST DISTANCES OVER LAND AND SEA, ALL THE WAY TO THE PAPUAN AND INDONESIAN BORDER. IF TELSTRA CANNOT BE MADE TO COME TO THE PARTY, THEN SATELLITE BASE STATIONS, WITH DIGITAL MOBILE TRANSMISSION VIA HIGH POWER RADIOS AND OMNI ANTENNAS IS THE ONLY WAY TO SERVICE MANY PEOPLE AT ONCE. THE COST OF FIBRE TO THE HOME IS PROHIBITIVE IN THE EXTREME, WITH A LOT OF AREAS BUILT JUST ON BEDROCK, AS THE SEWERAGE RETICULATION SCHEME FOUND OUT. EVEN TO TELSTRA, IT IS NOT COST EFFECTIVE TO PUT ADSL OR FIBRE TO THE HOME OUT ON THE ISLANDS, AS EACH CONNECTION WOULD REQUIRE A VISIT BY PLANE OR HELICOPTER IN MANY CASES.
3. SUGGESTED DELIVERY MODES FOR THE VARIOUS AREAS IN MY JURISDICTION, IF NO TELSTRA PARTNERSHIP.

BAMAGA, INJINOO, UMAGICO, NEW MAPOON, SEISIA, ( NPA COMMUNITIES ) – A SATELLITE BASE STATION WITH A STRATEGICLY PLACED TOWER, WITH HIGH SPEED MOBILE / INTERNET OMNII TRANSMISSION TO USB DEVICES, FIXED WALL SERVICES, MOBILE PHONE DEVICES – EITHER SOLAR OR MAINS POWERED DEPENDING ON AVAILABILITY.

THURSDAY ISLAND – BROADCAST AUSTRALIA ( TV TX SITE ), TORRES SHIRE COUNCIL MILLMAN HILL WATER RESERVOIR SITE, ERGON ENERGY HILL ABOVE THE POWER STATION, AND THE AVIATION / CUSTOMS SATELLITE VHF SITE ON MILLMAN HILL ALL COULD BE USED AS TOWER / TRANSMISSION SITES TO GIVE GOOD COVERAGE IN THE THURSDAY ISLAND – HORN ISLAND – HAMMOND ISLAND AREA. TELSTRA HAS NO CONTROL OVER THESE SITES, AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO FREQUENCY ISSUES WITH THE DEPT COMMUNICATIONS.

PRINCE OF WALES SITES, ENTRANCE, FRIDAY, ROKO, ESCAPE RIVER, PUNDSAND BAY, ALL COULD BE SERVICED BY SMALL SATELLITE DISHES AND CABLED , OR LOW POWER TRANSMITTERS.

ALL THE OTHER TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS WITH GREATER POPULATIONS NEED TO BE SERVICED BY SATELLITE, WITH A SMALL TOWER, AND HIGH POWER DIGITAL TRANSMITTERS.

THE ADDED BENEFIT TO THESE DELIVERY METHODS IS THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH SPEED DIGITAL SERVICES TO THE CUSTOMS, DEFENCE, AND FEDERAL POLICE, WHO ARE HIGHLY MOBILE AND IMPORTANT ORGANISATIONS IN THE SECURITY OF OUR CLOSE BORDERS WITH PNG AND INDONESIA.

4. IF TELSTRA WERE TO COME TO THE PARTY AND ALLOW THE USE OF THEIR FIBRE, HUTS, POWER, AND TOWERS, WE STILL NEED AN INDEPENDENT TRANSMISSION MEDIUM OUTGOING OTHER THAN THE NEXT G NETWORK, SO IT IS NOT TIED TO TELSTRAS POLICY OF NO OPTUS OR ANY OTHER PROVIDER OR RESELLER ON THE NEXT G NETWORK.
5. TRUE COMPETITION BRINGS INNOVATION, CHOICE, GREATER FLEXIBILITY FOR BUSINESS, AND GENERALLY LOWER PRICES. HIGH SPEED INTERNET FOR ALL WILL IN YEARS TO COME BE SEEN AS THE CATALYST THAT GAVE AUSSIE BUSINESS AND IDEAS THE CHANCE TO COMPETE IN A WORLD THAT NO LONGER REVOLVES AROUND THE FAMILY FARM OR LOCAL CENTRE OF TOWN. THIS IS CRITICAL FOR OUR REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR OUR HEALTH, PROSPERITY, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, REMOTE MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS, THE BLOOMING TORRES STRAIT ART AND ECOTOURISM INDUSTRIES, AND THE PREVENTION OF OUR AREA BEING A BIG SINK HOLE FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MONEY.
6. WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING, I WILL GIVE THE NBN MY FULL CO-OPERATION, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE TO ENABLE THIS NETWORK TO BE BUILT IN MY AREA, THAT DOES NOT FALL INTO THE SAME PITFALLS THAT TELSTRA HAS TAKEN YEARS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH IN THESE REMOTE AREAS. IT IS ONE THING TO INSTALL SOMETHING AND THEN WALK AWAY, IT IS QUITE ANOTHER TO MAINTAIN IT WHEN THE LIGHTNING AND RAINS COME, WITH THE SALT AIR CORROSION, FIRE ANTS EATING INSULATION AND BUILDIND NESTS IN EQUIPMENT, EAGLES NESTING IN RADIO MASTS, BIG RATS CHEWING WIRES, AND THE ANNUAL BUSHFIRES. ALSO A KNOWLEGDE OF LOCAL POPULATION AND GROWTH AREAS NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT. I AM ALSO INVOLVED IN THE DATA AND COMMUNICATIONS SIDE OF THINGS WITH THE TORRES SHIRE, THE TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY, THE TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL COINCIL, AND THE NORTHERN PENINSULAR AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL. CIVICA, WHO ARE THE PRIME DATA SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE COUNCILS, WILL ALSO HAVE VALUABLE INPUT INTO COMMS INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS IN THE PLANNING STAGES, AND I CAN GIVE YOU THE CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER OF THE KEY STAFF MEMBER IN THAT ORGANISATION.

THANKYOU ONCE AGAIN FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY, AND LOOK FORWARD TO MORE DIALOG.

REGARDS

RUSSELL BARKUS  
DOKTA MUZITEK