



Ms Alison Kelly
Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Kelly

Select Committee on the National Broadband Network

Thank you for giving the Office of the Privacy Commissioner the opportunity to provide comments to the Select Committee on the National Broadband Network's (NBN) inquiry.

I note that the NBN initiative proposes to connect 90 per cent of Australian homes, workplaces and schools with optical fibre-to-the-premise and to provide all other premises with next generation wireless and satellite technologies. I also note that according to the terms of reference, the Select Committee will consider any regulations or legislation pertaining to the NBN. It is in this context that the *Privacy Act 1988* may be relevant to the Committee's consideration of this initiative.

It can be the case with large infrastructure projects that they may involve the collection, use or disclosure of individuals' personal information. However, in the early stages of development of this particular initiative, the Office is unsure whether or not there will be any impact on the privacy of individuals. To determine this, the Office suggests that consideration be given to undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA).

A PIA is an assessment tool that describes the personal information flows in a project, and analyses the possible privacy impacts that those flows, and the project as a whole, may have on the privacy of individuals - it "tells the story" of the project from a privacy perspective.

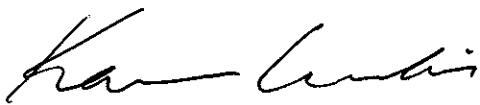
The purpose of doing a PIA is to identify and recommend options for managing, minimising or avoiding privacy impacts. A PIA can assist agencies to manage privacy impacts by providing a thorough analysis of the effect of the project on individual privacy and helping to find potential solutions. In many cases, a PIA can help to make a significant

difference to the impact the project may have on the privacy of individuals whilst still achieving the project's goals.

More information about the PIA process can be found in my Office's Privacy Impact Assessment Guide at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/publications/pia06/index.html> .

The contact officer for this matter is Mr Andrew Solomon, Policy Director on 02 9284 9800.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Curtis', written in a cursive style.

Karen Curtis
Australian Privacy Commissioner

7 July 2009