



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Commerce**

Science, Innovation & Business

Your Ref:

Our Ref: A1109841

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Enquiries: Stephen Grocott,
Telephone 9263 8234

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Kelly

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

The Western Australian Department of Commerce is pleased to respond to the Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network.

The Department of Commerce commends the Commonwealth Government's National Broadband Network (NBN) initiative and the aspiration to provide broadband to all Australians, regardless of their location in metropolitan, regional or remote areas. The scale of the task and complexity of the process is appreciated, as is the significance of adopting an approach that can ultimately deliver this important goal.

The Department acknowledges that the Commonwealth's stated objectives are dependent on the NBN implementation study. While pleased to provide input to the inquiry as per its previous responses to the Committee, any ability to fully assess the implications of the proposed NBN policy approach is limited until such time as the findings of the NBN implementation study and the arrangements of the NBN Company are known.

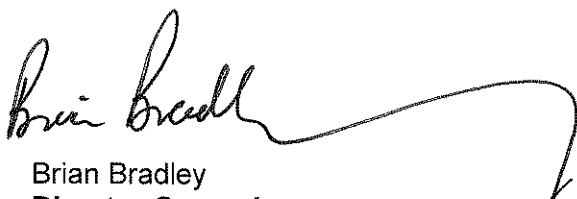
Pending the findings of the study, the Department remains concerned that Western Australia would be unduly disadvantaged if the proposed 90 per cent coverage threshold were to be based on population density alone (as defined by households, business premises and schools). Sparsely populated, mineral and energy resource-intensive areas of the State generate a significant proportion of the nation's wealth and would be at risk of being excluded from the main NBN model under this performance criteria.

In the absence of alternative solutions and depending on the timing of transition to a ubiquitous NBN, the Department strongly favours a continuation of the approach identified in the Glasson Review as currently supported by the Commonwealth. That approach is based on continued implementation of specific projects to improve and enhance government and essential service delivery to communities and to support the inclusion of indigenous groups, as a supplement to the NBN process.

In summary, the Department believes that the NBN needs to be an inclusive process, characterised by comprehensive information exchange across all levels of government and industry. The NBN policy approach needs to give due consideration to the unique circumstances of Western Australia in terms of its size and dispersed population, as well as reflecting and supporting the State's significant contribution to the national economy. Additionally, it must be considered likely that a market-based solution alone will continue to deliver sub-optimal outcomes for Western Australia.

The Department acknowledges the work of the Committee towards ensuring that the NBN process is a transparent one. Should you require any further information during the course of the inquiry, please contact Stephen Grocott within the Department of Commerce on telephone (08) 9263 8234.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Bradley', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right and curving downwards at the end.

Brian Bradley
Director General