



**Submission to the Senate Environment,
Communications, Information Technology and the
Arts Committee's**

***Inquiry into the provisions of the Telecommunications
Legislation Amendment (Protecting Services for Rural
and Regional Australia into the Future) Bill 2007***

**To: Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the
Arts Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT**

**From: Australian Private Networks
Eaglemont
Victoria**



Australian Private Networks Submission

Australian Private Networks (APN) welcomes this opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee on the critical need to ensure the continuing provision of metropolitan comparable telecommunications services to rural and remote Australia.

Through next generation satellite technology, APN is providing metropolitan comparable broadband services to Australians who are unable to access terrestrial broadband infrastructure.

Recently, APN installed its 10,000th customer, highlighting the level of demand in regional and rural Australia for broadband services. In addition to rising demand for higher speed broadband connections, APN is seeing a growing desire in these areas for additional applications, such as movies on demand and more cost efficient voice services.

APN recognises there is a range of public and private sector plans for delivering high speed broadband services to the majority of Australians, and we welcome the increased level of debate regarding broadband coverage in this country.

However, the nature of Australia's geography, and in some instances topography, determines there will always be a small section of the population that will not be able to access terrestrial broadband services. In this context, APN believes there remains a strong requirement for government to ensure there is a broadband safety net for Australians living in regional and remote areas.

APN is therefore supportive of any mechanism that can ensure the continuation of government subsidies for the delivery of broadband services and applications to rural and remote Australia.

This can provide increased certainty to people in remote locations that they will not be left behind, and have their ability to live and work in these areas limited by their inability to access higher speed broadband services and applications.

Australians deserve the opportunity to access next generation services where possible, and to this end APN is continually updating its service offerings, and developing improved applications.

Through our Activ8me product, APN is currently providing 512k/256k per second broadband services, but will soon include 1mg/512k per second and 2mg/1mg per second offerings.

In addition APN has developed a suite of applications, including movies on demand, videoconferencing and managed voice services. In this way, the scalability of the technology can ensure that all Australians, no matter where they live, can enjoy work and lifestyle improvements.



APN uses the IPSTAR broadband satellite platform, which is globally recognised as the next generation technology for the delivery of broadband services by satellite.

IPSTAR has made significant investments in remote Australia, constructing ground stations in Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill, and provisioning 15 per cent of the satellite's overall capacity of 45 gigabits per second to the Australian continent.

This commitment by the IPSTAR/ APN partnership to provide metro comparable, world-leading satellite broadband services to remote locations would not be possible without the government support made available through previous and current programs such as

- Higher Bandwidth Incentive Scheme (HiBIS)
- Broadband Connect; and
- Australian Broadband Guarantee

Over the past few years, government programs have enabled IPSTAR and APN (along with other service providers) to significantly improve speed and service offerings over previous satellite broadband plans, while at the same time seeing costs to consumers fall from approximately \$70 per month for a standard service, to the \$29 per month available under current plans.

In conclusion, Australian Private Networks would broadly support any proposals aimed at providing greater assurance to rural and remote Australia, regarding the delivery of metropolitan comparable services.

We believe government programs remain central to achieving this outcome, along with advances in technology which facilitate the scalability required for the provision of services to people in more remote areas of Australia.

Australian Private Networks would be delighted to provide additional information to the Senate committee if required.

Gordon R. Tudor

Director

Australian Private Networks Pty Ltd (APN)

