

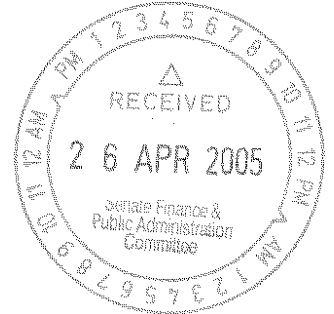
**North Burnett Regional Economic Development Council Inc**

Post Office Box 169  
Monto Qld 4630

Phone: 41 663124  
Fax: 41 663885  
Email: nbredc@cybertown.com.au

April 17, 2005.

Committee Secretary  
Senate Finance & Public Administration Committee,  
Department of Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA, ACT. 2600.



Dear Sir,

**Re: Submission to Inquiry into the Regional Partnerships Programme.**

North Burnett Regional Economic Development Council Inc. recently made a submission to the above named Reference Committee. This submission was published on the Government web site under parliamentary privilege.

I would like to submit the attached documents for addition to your files on this inquiry.

**Attachment A.**

**Letter from WBB ACC re our submission.**

**Attachment B.**

**Report from Mr Ian Gordon of GDI Ltd, consultants for Wide Bay Regional Organisation of Councils who are preparing information on the Wide Bay ICT Project.**


If you would like additional comment on either of these attachments, we would be happy to provide further detailed information.

You will notice that the WBB ACC has asked to have an urgent meeting with our Organisation. In the spirit of co-operation, the Secretary of N.B.R.E.D.C. has contacted the Executive Officer of WBB ACC with a view to arrange such a meeting within the next week. This will allow us to discuss our submission and inform them of our actions in regard to the above documents. We have also written to Mr John Cobb of DOTARS forwarding him a copy of the above documents as well as a copy of this letter.

This has been done with a view to all parties being aware of our actions.

Thank you for your interest in our submission. It is our hope that more equitable access will be made available to all communities from the results of your inquiry.

Yours faithfully,



Dolores M. Fowler.

Acting President

North Burnett Economic Development Council Inc.

C.C.            Hon John Anderson . Minister for Transport & Regional Services.

Hon Paul Neville      Member of Hinkler.

Mr John Cobb Parliamentary Secretary      DOTARS.

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April 17 2005.

Mr John Cobb  
Parliamentary Secretary  
Department of Transport &  
Regional Services,  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA. ACT. 2600.

Dear Sir,

**Re: Senate Inquiry Submission.**

As you would be aware, North Burnett Regional Economic Development Council Inc., recently made a submission to the Senate Inquiry in relation to the Regional Partnerships Programme. While we have received much comment about this submission, our comment was in relation to the process and not about allocation of finance.

However, this intention seems to have been missed within the local area.

I am attaching two documents that have recently come into our possession.

**Attachment a. A letter from WBB ACC**

**Attachment b. A report from GDI P/L . This company is the Consultancy working for the Wide Bay Regional Organisations of Councils preparing an application for the WB ICT Project.**

In relation to Attachment a. The comments in this letter are flawed. No doubt if they had access to the attachments we sent with the submission they would agree with us. We attached a number of diarised comments with times and dates of our contact with WBB ACC. We also had documented entries in relation to our contacts with your Department. Should you wish to see a copy of these diary entries, we would be happy to oblige.

In relation to Attachment b. This is a report made at a recent meeting at which Mr Brett Allen, our President, was in attendance. As there is no indication that it is a "Commercial in Confidence" document, we believe it is quite in order to send this to you.

Mr Ian Gordon, the representative for this Company met with the Manager of our IT Centre when he first started researching the WB Project. In relation to his comments on the activity plan, we believe a high percentage of the background for these comments has been taken from the work our Organisation undertook some two and a half years ago. Our research was done at our expense and that of our partners. We shared our information with him in the spirit of

co-operation to ensure that the Burnett Inland would prosper from the introduction of Broadband access. I might also add, that the target area for the WB ICT Project is similar to ours. The additional activities he mentions are part of those mentioned in our application for funding under the Regional Partnerships Programme.

If you have read our submission to the Senate Inquiry Committee, a reference was made to the WB ROC through Ian Gordon, asking us to withdraw our application during the period prior to the last Election. This request was in relation to this project and our Cybertown project.

It is now understood, that the WB ROC is about to apply for funding from your Department to deliver the same project that we had intended to deliver from the Cybertown Project. While we do not wish to preclude the Burnett from access to Broadband technology, can you give me a reason why the WB ROC should be successful with their first application when ours was refused after trying for at least two years?

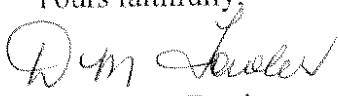
- Our research was done without assistance from Government, theirs has been done with a grant from Government.
- When we applied one of the main reasons for refusal was that the technology had not been tested in the market place. Our partners profiles were supplied, our assurances given that it had been tested with indications where it had been used and as further proof, we produced media articles stating that it was the way of the future. Despite this information, it was not given consideration in the assessment of our project.
- When LGAQ launched their video-conference programme, funded through Networking the Nation, Senator Boswell was told at that launch that our project was being researched. An account of this launch was published in the Council Leader Magazine in April – May 2003. A member of our Management Committee was the Local Government elected member on this project committee who spoke with Senator Boswell about the project. Senator Boswell had talks with our IT Centre Manager in his office in Brisbane shortly after that launch and consequently gave us a letter of support for the Project.

I could continue with the comparisons. What I would like to convey to you is the fact that we received conflicting comments through the process that indicated to us that the assessment panels either did not understand the concept or certain information was not acknowledged.

N.B.R.E.D.C. Inc., has prepared a request to have our project reviewed. This request should arrive in your hands within the next few days. I trust in the essence of equity this request will be granted. You will note that I have marked this letter as Commercial in Confidence. As WBB ACC has requested an urgent meeting with them, our Secretary has written to them to organize a meeting with them within the next week. To that end, we believe this will allow time for us to advise them of this letter and in a spirit of co-operation discuss our submission with them. This does in no way mean that we believe we must inform them of our every move in relation to our activities. It will also allow time for all other recipients of these documents to be aware of their contents.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter. If frustration is indicated in this letter, perhaps you will understand why we question the process under which the local assessment panels look at projects. I look forward to your response in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

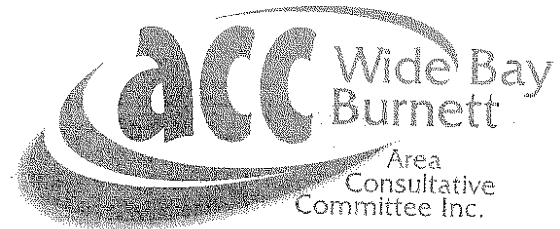


Dolores M. Fowler.  
Acting President.

C.C.            Hon John Anderson – Minister for Transport & Regional Services.  
  
                  Hon Paul Neville        Member for Hinkler  
  
                  Secretary                Senate Finance & Administration Committee.

Tuesday, April 05, 2005

The President  
North Burnett Regional Economic Dev Council Inc  
PO Box 169  
MONTO 4630



*Facilitating partnerships  
to build the region's future*

Dear President Brett,

The Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee (WBB ACC) wishes to take this opportunity to acknowledge the submission made by your organisation to the Senate Enquiry into Regional Partnership and Sustainable Regions Programmes.

As you will be aware, this submission is now freely available to the public, via the enquiry website at [http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/reg\\_partner\\_prog/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/fapa_ctte/reg_partner_prog/index.htm)

Needless to say WBB ACC respects the right of any individual or organisation to make submissions to such an enquiry and in fact, encourages open communication at all times.

Therefore it would also go without saying that WBB ACC was extremely disappointed that there was no prior communication between our organisations, in regard to the very grave concerns that were put forward in your submission.

From the information contained in the submission, it is clear that there are misconceptions regarding the role of WBB ACC and the assessment processes that are required through the Regional Partnerships Programme by the Department of Transport and Regional Services. It is the primary role of your local ACC to ensure that the information presented in an RP application is clear, concise, and factual and will give the application the very best opportunity of being successful.

The WBB ACC Assessment Committee reviews applications taking into consideration the RP Guidelines and the WBB ACC Strategic Regional Plan. One other key consideration is the validation of funding from various partners, both cash and in-kind. This needs to be open and transparent and have written evidence from the partners.

It is also prudent to remind NBREDC that the Regional Partnership Programme is a discretionary programme and the **final decision** rests with the decision maker in Canberra, currently the Parliamentary Secretary to Transport and Regional Services, John Cobb, **not** with an individual ACC.

There are some issues of concern that are issues of concern to WBB ACC as well as NBREDC. These include the lengthy time between lodgment of application and the final outcome, and that in some cases the explanations given regarding the final outcome are not always as clearly articulated, as applicants would wish.


At all times, it is the desire of WBB ACC to ensure that all opportunities to progress the region are supported and that the scarce available resources to support these opportunities are maximised. It is for this reason that WBB ACC has worked closely with the Monto community and council, particularly during and after dairy de-regulation to ensure the best possible economic and job outcomes.


WBB ACC is very concerned that your organisation felt that there was no opportunity to meet face to face at the Executive level and discuss your concerns. I wish to extend an invitation for this to take place, as soon as possible. Please contact our Executive Officer, Joan Brazier, to arrange.

Yours sincerely

For Bill Trevor  
Chair

Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee Inc

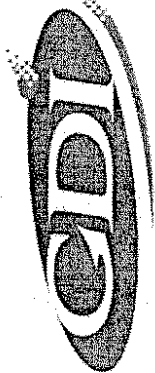
 "The Globe"  
190 Cheapside Street  
Maryborough 4650

 Tel: 07 4121 7099  
Fax: 07 4121 7095

 Email [info@wbbacc.com.au](mailto:info@wbbacc.com.au)  
Web site [www.wbbacc.com.au](http://www.wbbacc.com.au)



GDI Pty Ltd  
201 Wickham Terrace  
Spring Hill Qld 4004  
Telephone: +61(7)3832 1222; Facsimile: +61(7)3832 1212  
Email: info@gdinnovation.com



**STRATEGY ONE: REGIONAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT – Information Communication Technologies (ICT) Comments  
CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL BUSINESSES TO INNOVATE, GROW AND DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE FUTURES. AS A  
LEAD INDUSTRY GROUP, ADDRESS BARRIERS TO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION.**

This document is intended for the Regional Industry Development Action Group meeting in Childers on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Although we have been invited to address the meeting, neither of the GDI staff involved in the Wide Bay Burnett ICT infrastructure project is able to attend due to other commitments. However, we hope the following notes are a useful introduction to what we're doing in the region, and that we find useful synergies with the work of the Industry Development Action Group. GDI has a contract with the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils to survey the region for ICT demand, identify gaps in services and capabilities and present 12 infrastructure development opportunities for further development.

The ICT industry is poorly represented in the wide Bay Burnett region. A survey carried out and an ICT demand analysis of the region indicate relatively poor utilisation of ICT by business in the region, especially in smaller centres and rural areas. This is due to the following characteristics of the region:

1. There is a general lack of infrastructure such as required to deliver broadband services, especially in smaller centres and rural areas.
2. A relative lack of awareness of the business benefits to be gained through the innovative use of ICT if it is available, and
3. Limited or poorly experienced ICT service providers to assist users buy, install and maintain ICT products and services.

There is a widespread belief at all levels of government that a lack of ICT infrastructure – both physical systems to deliver services (broadband, mobile telephony etc) and the skills to supply and use them now restricts business development in virtually all types of industry. An increasingly evident issue is where there are no broadband services available, business cannot properly interact with other business, in the larger centers and cities for example, which are now dependent on broadband access for normal business activities. At a very simple level, email now has as a matter of routine, quite large files attached in normal business correspondence. We find many companies in the region on dial up internet access that cannot interact anymore with other business because they can't download mail with attachments.

We also find that when business can access some form of high speed service such as ISDN or satellite if ADSL is not available, the process of application, the cost barriers and general lack of local skills for installation and maintenance mean much latent demand for faster services is not satisfied for these reasons.

Finally, ICT service providers are generally unaware of the demand, available infrastructure and opportunities in the Wide Bay Burnett region. There is in the region of \$240m pa of contestable telecommunications demand in the region alone, for example. We need to present the opportunity for infrastructure investment to potential suppliers in a way that lowers the cost of entry for the industry and we're working on that as a part of the current project for the wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils.

GDI Pty Ltd

201 Wickham Terrace

Spring Hill Qld 4004

Telephone: +61(7)3832 1222

Email: info@gdiinnovation.com



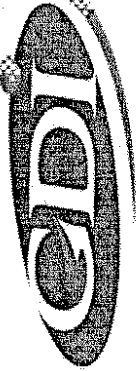
Our comments on your activity plan follow. We look forward to your thoughts in return:

<b>PROJECTS</b>	<b>GDI Comment</b>
Regional Audit to identify natural resources available, needs of industry and community, competition and niches available	<p>We have assessed the current availability of Telstra ADSL (broadband) services throughout the region, and the (spatial) location of all businesses and residences to identify those with access to ADSL and those who don't have access.</p> <p>We have also identified all the current network access points in the region that offer competitive access to Brisbane.</p> <p>A detailed survey of ICT demand by local government area (LGA) is complete.</p>
Value adding of local primary produce	<p>We have detailed survey results from over 500 business respondents in the region regarding their current use of ICT, intentions, and views on the supply of services in their area.</p>
Targeted Project Facilitator	<p>All this information forms the basis for an accurate view of supply and demand of and for ICT services in the region. This information is owned by the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils and will be used to develop strategies to improve ICT availability and use in the region. I would expect that any proposals to work with the Industry Development Action Group on specific projects would be welcome.</p> <p>We note that primary producers, as one of the largest industry sectors in the region, are usually very poorly served with broadband infrastructure.</p> <p>Happy to assist here if ICT is a major issue in a project.</p>
Research & Development to develop new technology	<p>We are very interested in the new economies that wireless technologies appear to bring to regional areas. While these technologies, typically for the delivery of wireless and telephony services are new, there are many new providers coming into the market. We need to develop market attraction strategies that get service delivery into the region with minimised risk of failure for the providers.</p>
Feasibility studies - alternative power sources and technology	<p>We are planning to suggest at least two feasibility studies for broadband service distribution that are suitable for regional areas.</p>
Rural industry development	<p>Same comments as above - we would like to target some farms needing broadband services and which would make good case studies and reference sites for other farmers.</p>





GDI Pty Ltd  
 201 Wickham Terrace  
 Spring Hill Qld 4004  
 Telephone: +61(7)3832 1222; Facsimile: +61(7)3832 1212  
 Email: info@gdinnovation.com



Tie industries to regions and develop partnerships	We have identified several regionally based ICT providers that could be assisted to develop their businesses in the region and will be suggesting an approach to assist these organisations.
Diversification – connect young/ inexperienced businesses with mentors	No specific comment

**STRATEGY TWO: YOUTH RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT**  
 DEVELOP YOUTH CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES. RETENTION OF YOUTH IN REGIONAL/RURAL AREAS IS INTEGRAL TO FUTURE OF REGION AS A WHOLE, AND VITAL TO THE GROWTH OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

<b>PROJECTS</b>	
	<b>GDI Comment</b>
Invite youth to be part of solutions	No specific comment
Different employment pathways at schools	We have a project in mind that raises the profile of ICT as a career option in schools
Young Achievers Australia	No specific comment
Enhanced Training facilities	No specific comment

YOUTH RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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