

The Manager
Backhaul Blackspots Branch
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

BACKHAUL BLACKSPOTS INITIATIVE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PAPER

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Backhaul Blackspots Initiative Stakeholder Consultation Paper.

The City of Bunbury views Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a vital part of the community and business landscape in our region. Broadband backhaul is the equivalent to this that road and rail networks are to transport and backhaul infrastructure needs to be viewed in the same manner.. We are very supportive of the Commonwealth's decision to establish the National Broadband Network (NBN) and see it as an opportunity to underpin the existing developments in the technology and creative industries in our region.

The City has an existing strategy is has been working towards revolving around the improved and increased take-up of ICT within both the general and business community. Due to this we have also recently attracted a digital animation joint venture into town. A high-speed, competitive provision of backhaul services is going to be vital in leveraging and maximising the opportunities from this industry in the future. In addition, we currently have significant industry requirements for broadband through specialist medical and engineering operations in the region.

I am going to focus on just one of the Issues for Consultation:

- **4.1 Locations**

The Greater Bunbury area is currently has over 60,000 residents with an annual population growth rate of 3.6 per cent over the past five years, which makes it one of the fastest growing urban regions in Australia.

Currently, the only wholesale optic fibre network servicing Bunbury is provided by Telstra (similarly to most parts of regional Western Australia). For a location the size of Bunbury, with the significant industrial operations occurring within our regions and the emergence of a number of digital content and technology dependent businesses this single provider is of serious concern. The higher cost than is available just up the road in Perth, coupled with a lack of redundancy in the event that anything happens to the single link coming into town has the potential to be a significant impediment to future business opportunities, with some of the more dependent locally based and generated businesses already looking at needing to relocate at least parts of their operations to the metropolitan area.

The NBN provides the opportunity for a more competitive environment with regards to technology pricing to occur in our region, which is going to be a key to maximising the

current opportunities that are opening up, as well as vital in efforts to provide job opportunities for the rapidly increasing population.

Given these issues, having the Bunbury region targeted as a priority area would appear very appropriate.

Regards

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