

Backhaul Blackspots Initiative Stakeholder Consultation Submission (May 2009)

From: Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board

The Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board (AHRDB) supports the Australian Government's provision of \$250m to improve the supply of backhaul to regional centres where there is a lack of competitive backhaul services ("blackspots"). This will encourage lower prices and higher quality services.

Background

The Adelaide Hills region consists of two local government areas administered by the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) (population 39,028) & the District Council of Mount Barker (DCMB) (population 28,270), both in the Federal electorate of Mayo. These local government areas are located immediately to the east of the Adelaide metropolitan area and consist of dormitory suburbs, small townships, a regional centre and rural land, split by the South Eastern freeway (M1) from Adelaide to Murray Bridge. Parts of the region are considered to be outer metropolitan Adelaide. (see maps: <http://www.adelaidehills.com.au/node/63>) There are 84 towns in the region, but only ten of these exceed 1,000 people, and of these only two (Stirling and Mt Barker) currently have competitive backhaul of sufficient capacity.

Outline of Submission

This submission identifies the need of Adelaide Hills towns for high speed, competitive backhaul, giving the economic case from a planning perspective.

The AHRDB recommends that backhaul to nine additional Adelaide Hills towns could be provided by a backbone linking **Meadows** (1726) in the south of the region through **Mt Barker** (11,160*), **Nairne** (3370*), **Littlehampton** (2395), **Hahndorf** (1919*), **Balhannah** (1028), **Woodside** (1685*), **Lobethal** (1738*), **Birdwood** (1127) then to the Barossa Valley in the north. This could be achieved with a backbone using a mix of fibre and radio, with breakouts from existing fibre, and a feeder distribution of radio, ADSL or WiMAX. (* population figures provided by BroadbandSA)

Existing competitive backhaul is provided by fibre to **Stirling** (NextGen), and by microwave to **Mt Barker** from Murray Bridge (Agile/Internode). Breakouts from the NextGen fibre, which is understood to follow the Adelaide-Melbourne railway line, should occur at Hills railway towns such as **Aldgate** (3343), **Bridgewater** (3470), **Balhannah** (1028) and **Nairne** (3370).

Regional Growth and Demographics

Overall regional population growth is about 0.8% pa (ABS: June 2005 to June 2006), with Planning SA forecasting a population increase in the Adelaide Hills region from 64,293 to 74,741 by the year 2021. However this growth has not been uniform throughout the region, as the District Council of Mount Barker has been experiencing consistent growth that place it within the top 5 LGAs. With recent rezoning of 140 hectares of greenfields land in Mt Barker and the nearby townships of Nairne and Littlehampton, this is expected to continue with Planning SA predicting growth of 25% to 20,000 people by 2013.

With this in mind, it is important that sufficient capacity be provided to allow for this increased demand.

The 2006 Census showed that the population of the Adelaide Hills Region is relatively young compared with the State average, with more than one third of its population under 25 years. As this demographic has a higher use and uptake of broadband, allowance will need to be made for above average usage.

Future demand is likely to be linked to regional economic opportunities such as wine and food tourisms, the mining and resource industry and activities that service a growing population.

Needs

The following eleven Hills townships, currently without competitive backhaul, have retail/industrial zones, designated for development and would therefore benefit greatly from access to high speed broadband.

Those with local schools have been coded SS (secondary), PS (primary).

- Aldgate** (3343) zoned for retail expansion [PS, PS]
- Balhannah** (1028), zoned for retail expansion
- Birdwood** (1127) potential increase in residential density [SS, PS]
- Bridgewater** (3470) zoned for retail expansion [PS]
- Hahndorf** (1919), specialty shops in rural centre [PS]
- Littlehampton** (2395), zoned for retail expansion, specialty shops in rural centre [PS]
- Lobethal** (1738):Adelaide Hills Business and Tourism Centre, zoned for retail expansion with specialty shops in rural centre, industrial zoned land, potential increase in residential density [PS, PS]
- Meadows** (1726) industrial zoned land [PS]
- Nairne** (3370), zoned for retail expansion, specialty shops in rural centre, potential increase in industrial zoned land [PS]
- Oakbank** (449) zoned for retail expansion [PS, SS]
- Woodside** (1685), zoned for retail expansion, specialty shops in rural centre, industrial zoned land, potential increase in residential density [PS]

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