

From: GP
Sent: Monday, 24 March 2008 8:08 PM
To: National Broadband Network Taskforce
Subject: Broadband Comments

As a concerned Regional Area 1 resident which to date has never been able to access broadband of any sort (ADSL, Wireless etc) and still depending on increasingly unreliable dialup access (because of pair gain related issues as well as failing repeater issues at our nearest Telstra connection point), I urge the federal government to hasten the introduction of a national broadband initiative including but not restricted to Fibre Optic links, wireless access provision (in areas not able to be serviced by fibre resources), and the rollout of additional ADSL2+ enabled exchanges throughout those communities not able to access newer infrastructure broadband provision services.

I welcome the announcement by the Governemnt and Telstra regarding the rollout of additional exchanges, however I note that most communities will not benefit from this initiative (my own included).

I also note that the provision of ADSL and ADSL II in different exchanges will do nothing for those consumers who are outside the (often arbitrary) access distance limit from the exchange. In my own case even assuming the availability of ADSL enabled exchanges, the distance from the exchange as the crow flies (approx 5K) but 7-8K in terms of actual distance because of the existing cable layout structure prevents my immediate access to ADSL enabled exchanges for broadband purposes. I also understand pair gain (applies to our service) connected services create further access restrictions.

A possible solution for consumers like myself would be to subsidize the application of technology (currently available and sometimes employed by Telstra) which extends accessible distance limits to around 8K. (This figure may now have changed but was current a year ago when I last checked). Since I live in a community where the majority of town based residents (regional consumers are quite used to sub-standard services) are satisfied with ADSL I service technologies (or simply don't believe they will ever see anything better); and who are not lobbying Telstra for anything more sophisticated or useful, the liklihood of any further improvements at the exchange level are even more remote.

I would also make the point that investment in a fibre to the node network, while expensive in the shorter term, will seem like a sound investment in even only 10 years after its completion date, particularly if not simply financed by Telstra for the benefit of its shareholders and management team, but for and in the interest of all Australians, where the infrastructure is available to any service provider wishing to provide services in any area, or even to community groups prepared to contribute towards the provision of those services. It will in my opinion create a convenient infrastructure platform for the provision of government services and an invaluable resource in terms of industrial economic competitiveness. I note also that while the extension of ADSL II enabled exchanges will make a difference for some consumers, it will not create competition in those exchanges (such as that servicing our area) where the sole provider of broadband services will still only be Telstra simply because no other ISP DSLAMS are installed because of insufficient perceived demand.

I urge the minister for communications to make executive decisions in the interests of ALL Australians and to make them in a timely manner. I also urge the Minister to push forward the broadband infrastructure agenda in a way that does not provide for endless stalling on the part

of Telstra in terms of wholesale access pricing in the event of a large financial involvement by the company in the rollout of a National fibre network. I would like to see an independent authority providing wholesale access pricing and the least amount of involvement in the provision of trunk services by Telstra.

In case it may seem that I live beyond Burke, in fact I live just outside the village of Hampton 35K from Toowoomba on the New England Highway. Our house is situated no more than 500 metres off the highway. I would also point out that there are no competitive wireless options in our area as well. Telstra is the only wireless provider, any other choice would involve grossly inflated roaming charges with either Telstra or Optus, since other wireless ISPs use those backbone networks in our area.

Sincerely,
Gus Ponti.