

## National Broadband Network Taskforce

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**From:** The Grange [thegrange@internode.on.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 March 2008 12:56 PM  
**To:** National Broadband Network Taskforce  
**Subject:** National Broadband infrastructure

As a rural business operating in an increasing digital world I would like to briefly put forward my views.

It seems to me that “the panel” has an onerous task in making a binding decision which will affect, for a very long time, the national communications infrastructure.

At a national level the most important question to be asked and answered is: **Is Fibre to the Node to most appropriate technology?**

Clearly on all available analysis it is not. The most appropriate technology for now and the foreseeable future is Fibre to the Home.

It must be remembered that whilst the Panel’s brief is to provide a minimum of 12 Mb/sec connection to 98% of the population that will be largely unachievable as FTTN technology relies on the current copper in the ground which in Australia is in a state of some distress. Moreover, as the rest of the developed world moves to 100 Mb/sec or even 1GB/sec the targeted 12 Mb/sec will soon be seen to totally inadequate.

It also must be remembered that a FTTN network does not automatically provide an upgrade path to a future FTTH deployment, as those Nodes will become totally redundant in a FTTH world, unless they are designed with FTTH in mind.

**From a rural perspective** I would have to suggest that it is vital to the national economy that rural/regional areas have the most to benefit from any upgrade in broadband plans and should be the first to receive the benefits. The vast majority of “metro” areas and population (some 70%) already enjoy the benefits of 12Mb/sec or greater speeds.

The greatest constraint on the deployment of a high speed network into rural and regional Australia is the lack of appropriately scaled backhaul and the pricing arrangements that exist.

**Competition:** An unfortunate fact is that the incumbent telco – Telstra has demonstrated time and time again that it wishes to pursue a path towards a total monopolisation of the Australian market place, and place its shareholder interests above those of the nation. The past 10 years of a regulated competitive market place has brought with it much innovation and a continual decline in the real cost of broadband to consumers. In its recent guidance to shareholders Telstra have already publicly stated that it expects prices to rise and competition to diminish.

Whatever the results of your deliberations it is paramount that a vibrant, innovative, competitive regime be allowed to flourish.

Thank you for the chance to make thee brief comments.

Best of luck with your deliberations. Please make your decisions based on what is best for the Nations future as we move forward into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, and not leave us with a 19<sup>th</sup> century outcome.

Regards

Gary Price

The Grange

PO Box 54

Campbell Town Tas 7210

PH: 6381 1686

Fax: 6381 1536

[www.thegrange.net.au](http://www.thegrange.net.au)

[thegrange@internode.on.net](mailto:thegrange@internode.on.net)