

From: Tony Antoniou
Sent: Thursday, 20 March 2008 7:52 PM
To: National Broadband Network Taskforce
Subject: Submission regarding FTTx project proposals

Hello,

First of all, I would like to thank the Federal Government for opening this subject for discussion with the general public. It is refreshing to see the perceived importance of what does ultimately concern Australia's population as a whole.

My only concerns are at the basic level, as I am a consumer with professional needs but still a consumer no less.

1) The biggest mistake the previous government made was to sell off Australia's core telecommunications infrastructure, with what I believe to have been little consideration for establishing solid regulation and legislation regarding the open access to it, which I do not believe we currently have in effect. The core infrastructure should have been sold to a party who would only have a vested interest in it as a wholesaler with no retail ties to give way to a conflict of interest. This is what we must ensure is the case if and when the FTTx project is to go ahead. Whomever receives the approval for their tender must ensure that they operate solely as a wholesaler, ensuring open access to the network by all licensed carriers and servicing/maintaining the network in such a way that is efficient for both the wholesaler and its customers (including the end user).

2) The technology should be such that with the expense involved for something on such a large scale, it must also be scalable. That is, serious consideration must be taken with regard to the "future-proofing" of the technology implemented. Should we start with Fibre to the Node technology, it does have its future limitations and when that limit is eventually reached, the next upgrade will only serve to result in an overall greater expense than going with Fibre to the Home in the first place. Time and time again we have seen how certain infrastructure projects (namely road, in my field experience) have proven to be a waste of taxpayers' money in the long term because the future planning for it has been short-sighted and consequently ends up costing the taxpayers even more to accommodate the growing needs. It's a matter of spending more now so that much less will have to be spent later, overall. With my observation of how customers in all walks of life use broadband, I believe that we need to look into FTTH as a matter of priority over FTTN. Copper can only allow for so much bandwidth and it is only a matter of time before all telecommunications services, including television, will enter into every premise on the one cable.

3) Above all else, there is no point in all the latest and greatest technology if it is only accessible by those who can afford what would be perceived as a luxury. Much like the spiraling health insurance costs, we need to ensure that the costs for such telecommunications are kept within reach of all members of the public. Time and time again we have seen how Australia lags behind a large number of its overseas companions. Granted, the fact that at least 80% of the data transferred has its origins and destinations outside of Australia, leaving us at the mercy of the consortiums managing the 2 major links would no doubt be seen as the major contributing factor to this. I understand that we will soon have PipeNetworks to thank for increasing competition in this area to help level the international playing field but that still doesn't guarantee that ISP's and other telecommunications service providers will be able to pass on that value to their customers if the core infrastructure wholesale costs are not carefully managed.

In summary, our Government's expert panel needs to demonstrate due diligence by way of taking into very careful consideration the type of technology used and the regulation of it. The technology must be designed with a long future in mind, allowing for cheaper maintenance and upgrades as required so that the taxpayers' money is well spent whilst ensuring all

taxpayers will not struggle to gain access to it either. The core infrastructure must be heavily regulated in order to ensure that we don't suffer from spiraling costs as we have experienced with our banks, let alone access issues by service providers who wish to utilise the core infrastructure to reach their customers. In essence, let's not let history repeat itself because should that happen, the end result will be no different to the situation we are in now and that would make it all a futile effort and an unnecessary expense for all concerned.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to seeing further developments as time goes on.

Faithfully,

Tony Antoniou