

PO Box 433
ROSANNA VIC 3084
June 8, 2008

The Secretary
Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee
RTIRC Secretariat
Locked Bag 7001
MANUKA ACT 2603

Dear Sir or Madam

May I please make the attached submission on broadband solutions for remote areas, specifically for the township of Skenes Creek in Victoria, as requested by Senator Conroy's press release *National Broadband Network Submissions due* dated 5 June 2008.

I have no objection to my submission being made publicly available.

Please thank your committee for its consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Bellair', written in a cursive style.

David Bellair

RTIRC submission on broadband solutions for Skenes Creek

My wife and I live primarily in Melbourne but spend part of our time at Skenes Creek which is a township of approximately 200 houses about 6½ km from Apollo Bay in Victoria. According to Telstra it is too far from the Apollo Bay exchange to receive a broadband service using ADSL over our telephone line.

Whether at Skenes Creek or Melbourne, we rely very much on broadband internet access for, among other uses:

- VoIP telephone calls to within Australia and overseas, costing vastly less than the equivalent Telstra service
- accessing information on internet web sites for professional and personal needs
- e-mail to communicate with and exchange electronic files with professional associates, family and friends
- downloading software updates (often hundreds of Mbyte) to keep our computers up-to-date and required to support our professional activities

The main point of this submission is that any broadband solution offered to Skenes Creek residents should connect through a hardware firewall to a local area network comprising several computers, VoIP telephone services, other computer peripherals and a WiFi local network. It should have the capacity to support many simultaneous subscribers just as ADSL does in the city, with an optional static IP address to permit remote access.

This submission is prompted by Telstra claims that its NextG wireless network provides an adequate broadband service to places such as Skenes Creek. However, the equipment currently provided by Telstra will connect only to a single computer (not to a network), and despite marketing hype about speeds I am unsure whether it would support VoIP, especially at periods of peak use. Third parties may supply hardware (at considerable additional cost) to connect NextG to a local network but it would be unsupported by Telstra and I am unsure whether NextG has the capacity to support many simultaneous users in the Skenes Creek and Apollo Bay areas.

We are most appreciative of our current 256/256 kbit/s broadband service at Skenes Creek provided by SnoopCommunity using a Motorola Canopy wireless network operating in unlicensed spectrum. However VoIP is unusable at peak periods (I believe due to capacity limitations) and it does not have the reliability of ADSL in the city (there was a recent week-long outage caused by storm damage to a power line).

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