

Our Ref: EST/16/1

Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy  
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy  
Email: [remotebroadband.dbcde.gov.au](mailto:remotebroadband.dbcde.gov.au)

Dear Senator Conroy

## **Re: National Broadband Network Submissions**

We have been advised by the WA Local Government Association that your department is seeking submissions from Local Government relating to Broadband solutions for rural and remote areas.

We wish to bring to the attention of the Minister the fact that a number of our residents are unable to access high speed fibre broadband. In country areas, such as Merredin, there is a limited capacity to extend this essential service beyond 3-4km's from the town centre.

The major industry in Merredin is agricultural and those businesses that service the agricultural industry and unless these farming enterprises have access to high speed broadband at a reasonable cost, they will not be able to access the opportunities that high speed broadband will provide.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that some method other than fibre is provided, at a reasonable cost, for the 2% of Australian homes and business that do generate significant taxation income and gross domestic product and export income. We believe that they should be given the same opportunities as the other 98%.

For those 2%, we believe some form of wireless or satellite technology should be provided at the same cost structure as the fibre network.

Extending the broadband network to our rural and remote areas gives them the opportunity for education, entertainment, commerce and networking with their peers and whilst this in itself provides economic and commercial opportunities it also helps to deal with the isolation and stresses caused by adverse seasons.

On another matter, the roll out of the Next G telephone network has also disenfranchised our residents. In Merredin, farms only 20 km's northwest of Merredin, the access to Next G is negligible.

If you have any queries please contact me on 9041 1611.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'FB Ludovico', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**FB LUDOVICO**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

23 June 2008