

From: Alanna Edwards [REDACTED]
To: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au
Sent: Fri 2/12/2011 12:54 PM
Subject: Regional Telecommunications Review - Issues paper 2011 – 12

Dear Secretariat

Please find below, Isaac Regional Council's submission responses to the Regional Telecommunications Review – Issues paper 2011 – 12.

Question 2 What is needed to extend and accelerate the role of telecommunications services and ICT in delivering benefits to regional economies?

Partnering with both peak industry bodies and local organisations such as Agforward, NSW Farmers, Local Government, local chambers of commerce and progress associations provides opportunities to deliver ICT education, promotion, infrastructure and initiatives. It is the Isaac Regional Council's understanding that these organisation lack resources, specifically human resources and as such mutually beneficial partnerships need to be established to ensure effective partnerships.

Question 3 The committee would like to hear from businesses and organisations about their participation in, experiences of, and expectations about, the digital economy. Examples could relate to specific sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing or retail; business – to – business activities; productivity; teleworking; and the development of new knowledge- based industries.

In towns and regions which have undiversified economic bases, the digital economy will provide businesses in these areas with new opportunities to tap into alternative markets, helping to reduce economic risk and volatility associated with a narrow economic base. The digital economy is also revolutionising agriculture and mining operations and production techniques, providing significant opportunities to increase yields, production capacity, sustainability and profitability.

Question 6 What are the main barriers to regional communities increasing their use of information and communication technologies and do you have any ideas for ways in which regional communities could progressively overcome these barriers?

Previous programs promoting the digital economy such as Broadband For Seniors had guidelines which created barriers for small and regional communities to participate in these programs, making it prohibitive to run these programs in these communities. It is the Isaac Regional Council's position that the guidelines for such programs should not be prohibitive to regional and small communities participation in the program as these are the communities which stand to benefit most from such initiatives. There needs to be programs specific to regional, isolated and small communities understanding that these communities' baseline ICT knowledge and resources are limited and external support outside of these communities is required to facilitate knowledge growth.

ICT education and information programs which are rolled out in regional areas should not be based on whole regions but on individual towns. It is not an effective delivery model to deliver these programs in one town within an entire region as the distance that people would need to travel to attend these are prohibitive to them attending. Also, the small size of a community should not be a determining factor for not running a program in that town.

Isaac Regional Council thanks you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Regional Telecommunication Review.

Kind regards

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