



OUT11/22276

Ms Rosemary Sinclair
Chair
Regional Telecommunications Review Committee
C/O RTIRC Secretariat
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Sinclair

Submission to the 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review

NSW Trade & Investment welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review. The NSW Government recognises that a dynamic and strong digital economy is essential to drive economic growth in NSW and Australia and has established a Digital Economy Industry Task Force to make recommendations in relation to a Digital Economy Industry Action Plan for NSW.

The digital economy is well recognised for its potential to transform existing industries, to drive efficiency and productivity, and to create new export opportunities for Australian business. Increasingly, the ability to interact socially and participate in the economy will involve digital connection and digital services. Online citizens, communities and businesses are able to participate in the global digital economy, overcoming barriers formerly created by the 'tyranny of distance'.

The following information demonstrates the strength of existing NSW Government programs relevant to regional, rural and remote Australia. Our intent in providing this information is to invite consideration of whether such programs could be leveraged nationally.

In providing this information, it is noted that the Action Plan to be recommended by the NSW Government Digital Economy Task Force is due to be presented to Government by September 2012. This early in the Task Force process, its recommended actions are not yet available to be reflected in this submission.

For further information please contact Ms Kathryn Matthews, Director, Investment and Export Services via email at kathryn.matthews@business.nsw.gov.au or 02 9338 6895.

Yours sincerely

B D BUFFIER
Deputy Director General

2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review

The NSW Government is providing strong support for the development of a vibrant digital economy through its commitment to initiatives focused on information technology, social media and the development of new applications. These initiatives are beneficial to regional, rural and remote NSW and can be of great benefit to regional Australia.

The potential is for these programs to be supported at a national level and to be leveraged across all States and Territories.

The current initiatives being undertaken by NSW Trade & Investment to support the development of the Digital Economy of NSW are as follows:

Australian Centre for Broadband Innovation (ACBI)

Established in 2010 by the NSW Government and two of Australia's prominent research organisations, CSIRO and National ICT Australia (NICTA), ACBI provides unique opportunities for the creation of innovative broadband enabled services, their demonstration in real world situations and for analysing their potential commercial and societal value. From inception, the intent has been for ACBI to –

- work collaboratively with business, large and small; with universities and with communities
- provide the capacity to test over fibre, wireless and eventually satellite, and
- build into a national research initiative with nodes in various States, with the Tasmanian node already funded and announced.

ACBI's initial projects are all collaborations in Armidale, NSW and deliver outcomes of significance to regional Australia. These projects are being conducted with the University of New England (UNE) in the city of Armidale and its environs; and on campus: -

- Smart Farm - an operational, commercial farming property located in northern NSW will demonstrate the operational benefits of high speed broadband on Australian farms. This project will integrate technologies that will directly relate to and improve farming processes – cattle tracking, soil moisture monitoring as well as the capacity of the high speed connection to increase social interaction for farming families.
- Smarter, Safer Homes for the Ageing - this project will develop a Smart Assisted Independent Living (SAIL) platform that enables older people to live longer at home, using the NBN connectivity. This will be a non invasive

sensor, monitoring and communication system that can be easily installed in broadband connected homes and integrated with medical decision support so that alerts for health status can be generated. The system will also support easy to use communications for residents, their carers and families.

- Social TV: Next Generation Content Discovery and Distribution – this project will research and showcase technologies in the area of social TV and content distribution in preparation for future demands and services. The project will scale up from a testbed, to hundreds of users in a university residence, and out to Armidale into residential homes with high speed broadband connections.

All these projects will be evaluated for their social and their economic benefits which will provide data specific to regional use of broadband technology.

ACBI's remit is to work with industry to create and deliver breakthrough broadband applications and measureable improvements in four key areas:

- Tele health and e-health technologies - providing increased access to different types of health services for people living in rural and remote areas;
- Infrastructure such as smart grid including in the area of transport - to deliver efficiency improvements, maximise business productivity and minimise pollution;
- E-Government - to develop ICT platforms and deliver access to better education, health, and utility services; and
- Digital media and interactive broadcasting - increasing possibilities for companies to collaborate on digital media projects, worldwide, in real time.

A Memorandum of Understanding with NBN Co is already in place, providing ACBI and its industry partners with access to Australia's National Broadband Network or a replicated network, for the development and testing of new technologies and applications.

NSW Trade & Investment recommends the Australian Centre for Broadband Innovation as providing both a model for collaborative development of the applications that will run on high speed broadband, in particular to the benefit of regional business, regional health and regional education and as a venue for testing those applications over a real network.

Collaborative Solutions Program

The Collaborative Solutions Program supports industry to develop innovative and compelling ICT-enabled solutions in key sectors that demonstrate the benefits of the digital economy. The Program focuses on opportunities, challenges and changing business models brought about by emerging technologies such as mobile computing, cloud computing, and ubiquitous high-speed broadband. It aims to do this by awarding incentive grants for the development and piloting of these new solutions.

The Collaborative Solutions Program adopts a contemporary approach to industry development through catalysing collaboration. This model has demonstrated successful outcomes in other ICT leading nations in delivering innovative world-class solutions in sectors such as Tourism, Finance, Education, Healthcare, and Media and Entertainment. This initiative is a proactive approach to developing the Australian ICT industry to deliver world-class solutions and economic growth in strategic sectors. Please note that Collaborative Solutions is not an apps competition – to receive funding, a bid must provide a complete solution including back-end integration.

In May 2011, the Program was inaugurated when 11 consortiums were awarded funding from a total funding pool of \$1.9 million to develop and pilot innovative new mobile solutions for the tourism and retail industries. The consortiums included some of the biggest names in technology development – multinationals like Google, Microsoft, Nokia and Singtel Optus – teamed with technology start-ups and retail, tourism and cultural organisations in exciting cross-sector collaborations. These projects have the potential to collectively generate over 400 jobs, \$170 million dollars in revenue and over \$90 million dollars in exports over the next three years.

In November 2011, the NSW Government announced a second “Call for Collaboration” with a focus on mobile solutions for Government, and specifically for our own super-agency, the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, which incorporates the Divisions of Primary Industries, Resources and Energy ie which delivers NSW Government operations to support Fisheries, Forests, Agriculture and Mining amongst others. The super-agency is also home to Destination NSW, with its strong regional Tourism focus.

As can be seen, a funded program can readily be directed where there is need of broadband enabled solutions in regional, rural and remote Australia, and the solutions delivered are “commercial-ready”, offering the consortium partners a low cost and low risk opportunity to fine tune and validate their technologies while providing a valuable and trusted reference site for promoting future domestic and international sales.

Through working with the various Divisions of NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, participants will have the opportunity to address a range of issues pertinent to regional and rural NSW. These may include enhanced delivery of Government services online through working with the Department’s regional offices, improved government-to-business interactions, reduced costs, faster processing, and more positive customer engagements.

NSW Trade & Investment recommends the Collaborative Solutions Program as a Program that will encourage greater participation in the digital economy by people living and working in regional Australia.

Digital Sydney

Sydney's Digital and ICT community captures all areas of digital creativity – from the visionaries and thought-leaders to the wordsmiths, the coders and the creative designers. It's the place where all areas of digital expertise meet, collaborate and showcase their work.

The idea for Digital Sydney emerged from the business community and was supported by NSW Trade & Investment. In 2010, the Digital Sydney Advisory Team, made up of industry experts and digital thought leaders, was appointed by the NSW Government to promote Sydney and NSW as Australia's digital capital, globally. The name Digital Sydney reflects the reality that international recognition of Australian city names, other than Capital Cities, is not high and a significant objective of Digital Sydney is international showcasing.

Digital Sydney encourages participation and collaboration, provides a home page for creative innovation and provides the place for digital agencies, technology companies, educational institutions and industry professionals to come together and promote their business while forming strong partnerships. It is stressed that Digital Sydney is not just about Sydney. Our digital ecosystem extends from Byron Shire to Broken Hill and from Batemans Bay to Bourke.

Being digital, you don't need to be in Sydney to be part of Digital Sydney.

Through the Digital Sydney network, professionals and businesses in the Digital sector can connect with their peers, promote their portfolios and collaborate with a broad group of technically and creatively inspired people.

It's about enabling and supporting activities within the digital realm in order to provide and sustain jobs. This is done by encouraging collaborations between the ICT and digital sectors, expanding the digital marketplace and promoting the investment and uptake of emerging digital technology.

NSW Trade & Investment recommends Digital Sydney as an initiative that will encourage greater participation in the Digital Economy by people living and working in regional Australia. Digital Sydney has the potential to span and connect all regions across Australia and offers the opportunity for regional participants to leverage the global branding of Sydney.