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To: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au
Sent: Sun 11/12/2011 5:40 PM
Subject: Submission for RTIRC hearing for the Central Coast, Killcare Surf Life Saving Club

As requested by the panel at the RTIRC hearing at Killcare Surf Life Saving Club on Friday 9 December, I am making a submission based on issues to do with internet availability at Copacabana, NSW.

I would like to address a number of issues related to poor internet availability and coverage, for Copacabana specifically and the Central Coast in general.

1. Availability

I initially had a Telstra ADSL 2+ internet connection at my property on [REDACTED], Copacabana. When we commenced construction of a new house on our property, I transferred our Telstra internet connection about 400m up the road to a rental property on [REDACTED] Copacabana, where we stayed for around 12 months until construction of our new house was complete. This new construction was fitted out, at considerable additional cost, with 2 dedicated offices, and wired for CAT5 ethernet plus 2 phone lines since both my wife and I were working from home. My wife in particular needs fast broadband internet as she is a 100% remote employee for the IT department of a large US multinational (Boeing Inc). I was at the time working from home for IBM and planning to start my own IT business on the Central Coast (plans I put on hold due in part to the lack of fast and reliable broadband internet). When I attempted to transfer my Telstra ADSL 2+ connection back to our home once construction was complete, Telstra told me there were "no ports at the exchange" and that they had no plans to increase capacity. I was advised to switch to a Telstra dial up plan and to "keep checking back every couple of weeks" because "people move all the time" and "an ADSL port may free up". Clearly this was not an option for 2 full time IT professionals, and after significant escalation the Telstra representative disclosed that there were a few available ports at the exchange which Telstra were required to allocate to competitors. I contacted AAPT and was able to get an ADSL connection. Ironically, the AAPT ADSL connection was at least 6 times faster than the ADSL 2+ connection we had with Telstra, which Telstra advertise to be the fastest ADSL available.

2. Reliability

Recently, Telstra had an outage on [REDACTED] Copacabana which affected every house, both fixed line phone and ADSL. The outage lasted for over 3 business days, during which we had no internet. When the lines were reconnected, we found that all the lines had been patched incorrectly, and everyone had someone else's line. This took a few more days to fix, during which time my wife's employer was unable to contact her (since her work line was going to someone else's fax machine). It is also worth noting that the Copacabana community website which I administer as a volunteer of the Copacabana Community Association is hosted out of Brisbane, due to the lack of redundancy and failover available for hosting on the Central Coast. This fact alone limits the amount of investment the Central

Coast can receive in the area of Cloud Computing/Hosting/Data Centres, an industry which would be ideally suited to the Central Coast due to the availability of land, skilled workforce and proximity to Sydney.

3. Cost

I own an investment property in Sydney which has cable internet. The plan provides a monthly allowance of 50Gb, at speeds over 10X that which we can enjoy in Copacabana, at a cost of \$69 a month. We are paying over double that amount for the best ADSL connection available to us in Copacabana. Central Coast residents are paying more, for poorer performance, poorer availability, and poorer reliability. Telecommunications must be one of the few industries which can get away with charging more for poorer service. If MacDonalds charged \$200 for a meal because Bells at Killcare charged \$100 for a meal, we'd be asking questions. We should be asking those questions of Telstra, in particular.

Summary

It is estimated that global online traffic will quadruple by 2015 as the number of gadgets linked to the internet climbs to 15 billion, according to a forecast by Cisco. Every day, 2.5 quintillion bytes of data is created – so much that 90% of the data in the world today has been created in the last two years alone. This data comes from everywhere: from sensors used to gather climate information, posts to social media sites, digital pictures and videos posted online, transaction records of online purchases, and from cell phone GPS signals to name a few. This requires new architectures and techniques to handle the exponential increase volume and variety of data. This is why the NBN can't come soon enough for the Central Coast.

To put this into perspective, even with the lack of new internet connections due to Telstra exchanges being over capacity, we can expect significant performance degradation of the ADSL network on the Central Coast over the next 3 years due to increased data volumes. That's without adding new connections - bear in mind the population growth projections for the Central Coast are estimating an increase of 100,000 over the next 20 years.

The Central Coast regional economy has a number of important characteristics:

- It constitutes a significant regional economy with a population of more than 305,000 and a total of 86,000 local jobs at the 2006 census
- It is the ninth largest population centre in Australia and the third largest residential region in NSW.
- About 35% of employed residents have jobs outside the region (mainly in Sydney).
- The population is projected to grow by a further 100,000 people by 2031, requiring more than 45,000 new local jobs.
- The population supports a significant number of local businesses.

(Source: <http://www.rdacc.org.au>,

<http://www.rdacc.org.au/filelibrary/Regional%20Economic%20Development%20and%20Employment%20Strategy%20Document.pdf>)

Without the NBN, it will not be feasible to attract overseas companies to invest in the region, to support the projected increase in population, need for new local jobs and demand for internet connectivity. The current Internet coverage is a patchy network of ADSL, Wireless and Satellite and is over capacity in most Exchanges. Telstra has actually run out of ADSL Ports in many Central Coast Exchanges yet is refusing to invest to increase capacity. As such, many Central Coast businesses already have to host IT infrastructure/Websites outside NSW. Business and IT professionals such as myself will continue having to commute down to Sydney for work, adding to the traffic and pollution which is already a huge problem.

The Central Coast is an area in huge need of investment in the area of telecommunications, internet in particular. While the NBN rollout will start to relieve the pent up demand and offer significant opportunities, the reality is that remote areas such as Copacabana and Killcare will not be seeing NBN connections in the short term, and consequently the RTIRC needs to find short term solutions, such as forcing Telstra to improve service, availability and reliability of ADSL internet, specifically through adding capacity at Central Coast Exchanges.

Regards,

Patrick