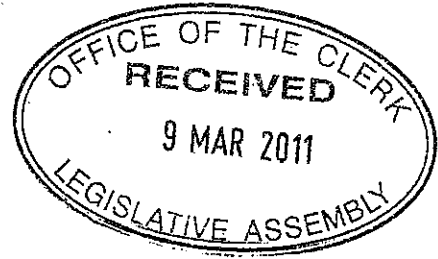




The Hon Paul Lynch MP
Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Commerce
Minister for Energy
Minister for Public Sector Reform
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

7 MAR 2011
MC/10/374



Mr R D Grove
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Grove

I refer to my letter of 8 November 2010 which foreshadowed a response to the six recommendations contained in the Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities' Report 4/54 – *Are you connected?*

The recent Council of Australian Government reforms to ministerial councils have resulted in the disbanding of the Online and Communications Council, and the removal of that forum in which I could bring your recommendations to the attention of the Commonwealth Government, as suggested by the report. I note that two of the recommendations have been referred to my colleague, the Hon Virginia Judge, MP and Minister for Fair Trading and the remaining four to the my colleague, the Hon Steve Whan, MP, Minister for Rural Affairs.

The NSW Government has given strong support to the building of the National Broadband Network (NBN) not only because of the significant economic benefits which it will bring to NSW, but because it will address the longstanding problems of poor communications in outer metropolitan, regional and rural NSW with which the Inquiry report is concerned.

The NSW Government established the NSW NBN Taskforce in 2009 to ensure that the NBN roll out in NSW occurs as quickly and as smoothly as possible. A key activity has been to provide NBN Co with access to State-owned assets where this will assist a speedy and smooth roll out in NSW. The NSW Government is working closely with NBN Co to ensure that these assets are available to expedite the rollout in the NBN Co's first and second release sites of Armidale, Minnamurra/Kiama Downs, Coffs Harbour and Riverstone in western Sydney.

An important initiative was the enactment of the National Broadband Network Coordinator Act 2010 (NSW) which establishes the NSW NBN Coordinator to act as a single point of contact with NBN Co. The Coordinator has the key role of negotiating access to NSW Government-owned infrastructure for use in the roll out, and the position will remain in place until the NBN is built and fully operational.

Seen & read R 9/3/2011


The NSW Government has also amended the NSW planning system to enable fast-tracked delivery of telecommunications facilities, including new broadband infrastructure, again this will benefit rural communities.

The NSW NBN Taskforce is now examining how best to maximise the opportunities provided by NBN Co for NSW-based businesses and what training needs are required for supporting the roll out.

More information on the NSW NBN Taskforce and broadband-related activities in NSW is also available at www.broadband.nsw.gov.au.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lynch', is written over a faint, circular official stamp or watermark.

Paul Lynch MP
Minister for Commerce