Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee ICT Studies
Centre for eCommerce and Communications
Lateral Plains

Background

During December 2009 the Mayors and CEOs of the Central Highlands region agreed to join forces to develop a regional ICT plan which, while being visionary in nature, will also provide practical guidance for participating LGAs and their communities. With the support of the Regional Development Australia Grampians Committee, activities were extended to the Wimmera Southern Mallee region during March 2010.

Central Highlands LGAs:
- City of Ballarat
- Central Goldfields Shire
- Golden Plains Shire
- Hepburn Shire
- Moorabool Shire

Wimmera Southern Mallee LGAs:
- Northern Grampians Shire
- Pyrenees Shire
- Rural City of Ararat
- Rural City of Horsham
- West Wimmera Shire
- Yarriambiack Shire

The regional ICT plans will support advocacy and lobbying activities linked to achieving an early rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN) in the Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee regions.

The objectives of the studies include:
- Complementing and building upon the Ballarat ICT 2030 and Moorabool ICT strategies
- Identifying why the regions are ideally positioned for an early rollout of the NBN
- Demonstrating the readiness and economic, social and community benefits which will result from an early rollout of the NBN in the regions
- Providing far sighted, forward thinking and practical advice to assist in advancing regional ICT adoption and effective use

The approach adopted to develop the ICT Plans includes:
- Consultation with the project control group, lead contacts in each LGA and an expert reference group
- The development of the project website (www.cecc.com.au/ch_ict_study) to support information collection and dissemination
- Data collection via the Grampians region ICT survey (www.cecc.com.au/ch_ict_survey), case studies and infrastructure mapping to develop an evidence base to support planning and development at both the local and regional level

A consolidated approach

Whilst the plan components for each area will be capable of standing alone in each LGA, the overall objective is to ensure the development of a consolidated plan that is applicable across the Central Highland area.

The clear focus for all 13 participating Councils is to advance ICT strategy for their LGAs as an integrated part of their economic and social strategies and to provide a consolidated and coordinated approach to assist and accommodate the future rollout of the NBN in the region.
Update on activities to date

Stakeholder consultation
- Met with Bill Mundy from Telstra Countrywide on 6 May 2010. Bill provided information about ADSL availability in the Grampians region to assist the task of infrastructure mapping
- Met with Catherine King - 6 April 2010
- Meeting with Jaala Pulford MLC scheduled for 7 July 2010
- Meeting with Catherine King MP scheduled for 12 July 2010

Key Meetings
- Met with Mike Kaiser from NBN Co on 7 May 2010. Various follow up communications including the request for information about which councils or areas within councils could be most conducive to aerial deployments
- Met with Peter Ziebell from Multimedia Victoria on 12 May 2010
- Advised NBN Co of the readiness of the Grampians region for the NBN rollout in June 2010

Event participation
- Attended National Broadband Network Conference (Sydney) on 24 May 2010
- Attended IPPA Victoria forum on Communication and the Digital Economy on 27 May 2010
- Organised the Grampians Region NBN Forum for local government representatives and other stakeholders to receive updates from the Victorian Government Science & Technology Policy branch, NBN Co and the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy on 22 June 2010
- Organised the Ballarat Broadband Community Information Session in conjunction with the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy on 22 June 2010
- Presenting at the Horsham Broadband Community Information Session on 3 August 2010
- Presenting at the Grampians Region Local Government NBN Forum on 4 August 2010

Communications
- ABC Radio Ballarat interview on 6 April 2010
- ABC Radio Ballarat interview on 23 June 2010 in regards to the financial heads of agreement announcement between NBN Co and Telstra
- WIN TV interview on 23 June 2010 in regards to the financial heads of agreement announcement between NBN Co and Telstra
- ABC Radio Horsham interview on 25 June 2010 regarding the NBN community information sessions