

**Submission from**  
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Introduction.

I have worked for the last eight years as a manager of a Telecentre in Rural WA.

I became acutely aware of a number of issues affecting personal, social and economic wellbeing of people in our small community.

These issues include:

**Lack of consistent and quality telecommunication services and support infrastructure**

Broadband is just a word in our rural community not a option. We do not yet have ADSL. HiBIS has been announced for one or two way satellite broadband but currently there seems to be a major problem with installation. It will be fantastic once the slow speeds are a thing of the past. Internet connections are often painfully slow from 12 to 31 kbps not uncommon for me at home measure using Telestra's <http://www.iapselfhelp.com> site

**Petrol prices**

Petrol prices have now hit \$1.22 cents per litre. This makes telecommuting very attractive of course.

**Availability of telework**

I have not come across any advertisements by employers including Government agencies that offer teleworking as an option except call centres. Working from home seems only an option for self employed professionals or innovators.

**Mature age people**

I do believe it is both possible and desirable for people to have this option – it is particularly attractive to mature age employees have a good work track record and can manage their commitments well For example I resigned from my job for health reasons but am keen to be able to work from home. I have considerable teleworking skills. However finding work of this sort is quite a problem, especially as there may also be a degree of age discrimination in the work place.

**Mixed work portfolios**

People in rural, areas and maybe the city too, often develop a mixed work portfolio of part time employment, casual or seasonal work, and self employment. Teleworking fits in well with this approach but there needs to be work available.

**Government agencies could model teleworking and set best practice standards**

Employers need to be encouraged, but Government agencies could well set a good example themselves to demonstrate both willingness and ability to manage telework arrangements.

**Support and training**

It is possible that many rural people would be keen to telecommute if support were available. As information and communications technologies continue to change rapidly, support in utilising it would greatly increase its chances of success.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following is a guide prepared by ATAC which may help in developing a response to this submission.

- Drawing from their own experiences and understanding of the subject, members of the public are invited to comment on a range of telework issues, including:
- The potential social and economic benefits and disadvantages of telework;
- Cultural, regulatory, technical and/or legal factors that are enabling or preventing telework adoption; and
- Policies and actions that Government could use to encourage the adoption and effective use telework in Australia.

Members of the public that are teleworkers, or who have previously engaged in telework activities, are invited to provide comment on issues including:

- **Where do you telework?**

I telework as a volunteer for a number of community groups. I manage the community web site <http://www.northcliffe.org.au/>, and hope to become involved in a project to encourage community groups to participate in the new <http://www.mynorthcliffe.com.au/> which has just been started. I am hoping to encourage the use of online discussion groups for community issues including employment. I have also used the internet to help identify funding grants and write application for community projects. A major one being funding of \$900,000 for a new multipurpose building.

- **Approximately, hour many hours per week do you telework?**

5 – 10 hours a week

- **What proportion of your working week is spent teleworking?**

I am not currently in paid work

- **What facilities and equipment do you use to telework?**

A computer (windows XP professional, range of software and dial up Internet access (No ADSL Broadband available)

- **What facilities and equipment are provided by your employer?**

None

- **Has the introduction of teleworking had a positive impact, a negative impact or no real impact on you?**

Positive, I really enjoy the challenges of the technology for community development but would like it to provide an income. It allows me to live in a beautiful place, in a real community with a sense of place where active participation in local activities and concerns are common rather than exceptional.