



Government of South Australia

Department of Education and
Children's Services

To: Department Communications Information Technology and the Arts

From: South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services

BACKING INDIGENOUS ABILITY

Submission of response to the Discussion Paper dated March 2006
"Delivering a Comprehensive Telecommunications Package in Indigenous
Communities".



Comments on issues raised within the BIA Discussion Paper March 2006

SHARED COMMUNITY PHONES

- Ref Q 4. We support the need for a process of community consultation with assistance from appropriately qualified agents that will identify priority of service needs, priorities for service delivery, assessment of priority communities based on community agreed criteria and weightings.
- Ref Q 5. It follows that if there is agreement amongst and across indigenous communities on the criteria and weightings for assessment or qualification for services that there be less emphasis on "Application Assessment" and more acceptance of an independent assessment process based on the agreed criteria.
- Ref Q 6. We believe the provision of the community services is best done by a tender process.

PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

- Ref Q 7. Prioritisation of hub communities for installation of this service could be by assessment against agreed criteria following consultation with the communities likely to be affected.
- Ref Q 8. Following a round of community consultation, the outcomes would include data such as agreed criteria on selecting priority sites for placement of public internet access

VIDEOCONFERENCING

- Ref Q 15. Use of familiar, community based facilities such as community halls, schools, or Government agency buildings that make provision of dual access and after hours may require additional security arrangements.

TRAINING

- Ref Q 19. Use of train the trainer programs to develop and support local champions, DVD's, etc.
- Ref Q 23. Community champions are an appropriate way to engage the community and assist with the use and maintenance and management of the telecommunications technology.



CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CONTENT

- Ref Q 28. Need to be culturally sensitive to issues around development of content that is culturally specific and likely to raise issues of IP, conflicts with traditional methods of transmission of culturally specific content, undermining the communities' traditional 'elder' structure that placed specific emphasis on cultural knowledge, selection of who inherited the knowledge and how and when it was communicated. This is a significantly sensitive area that impinges on the very fabric of indigenous community culture.

DEMAND AGGREGATION

- Ref Q 31. Demand aggregation is considered important and necessary so that benefits are aggregated and community responsibility for sustainability and appreciation of benefits is maximised.

Government providers in conjunction with ICC representatives and external expertise need to develop design principles around aggregation

FUNDING

- Ref Q 37. Staged funding is recommended at the highest level. Along the lines of three major stages to include:

1. Community consultation on priorities areas / communities, technology priorities, benefits and maintainability and on-going management issues

Training and development needs funding for all facets, train the trainer, course content development, delivery methods, etc.

2. Application submission will need support from 'brokers'
3. Implementation support including suitably qualified project managers that can ensure what was intended to happen does in fact happen including funding for documentation of the end product as part of the sustainability criteria.

"Program Funding" may be appropriate in some areas, such shared community phones, once the number is agreed following consultation and assessment based on agreed criteria and weightings



“Strategic Funding” may be appropriate where there is a need for example, to provide backhaul capability for remote communities, that would support other funding areas such as mobile connect.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Ref Q 41. Agency involvement may provide information technology expertise support, infrastructure support, management support, etc and provide after hours access in a controlled environment, as well as, the potential to ensure sustainability through responsible supervision.
- Ref q 42. Best practices in planning, developing and implementing telecommunications technology projects relies on appropriately qualified and supported community consultation and involvement, and consideration of all elements associated with success such as meeting ICC agreed priority needs, training, appropriate management and design of sustainable facilities.

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

- Ref Q 43 Industry may be able to assist with sustainability, but we think that it is more likely that a multi-disciplinary multi-agency coordination and management committee has a greater chance of ensuring sustainability.

It is also possible that the design of some services may also lead to higher levels of sustainability than others. For example, managed services with remote access and the use of services oriented architecture that uses thin clients, etc

Long-term sustainability of facilities is more likely to be achieved if there is a requirement for solution and infrastructure providers to consider whole-of-life maintainability and survivability and selection to include such criteria.

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

- Ref Q 47. Shared Responsibility Agreements

USE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND EXTENDING IT

- Ref Q 50 Use of existing infrastructure to extend use into the wider community



GENERAL COMMENTS

1. There are a number of areas in which DECS, in cooperation with other Agencies, can provide benefits to support funding applications. They are:
 - Public Internet Access;
 - Videoconferencing;
 - Training and Skills Development;
 - Community Champions;
 - Culturally appropriate content; and,
 - Demand aggregation.

2. Sustainability is a major issue. How do we achieve it? Suggestions include:
 - Multi-agency involvement may provide;
 - Common use facilities;
 - Multi-functional facilities;
 - Information technology expertise support;
 - Infrastructure support; and,
 - Management support.

3. Common-use, multi-functional facilities need to cater for out-of-hours access and not just business hour use.

4. The process of deciding on funding allocations needs to allow for individual community variations, in the sense that what one particular community believes is important and necessary may not be transferable to other communities that appear 'similar', on the surface.

Recognition of indigenous communities' distinctiveness is considered very important and requires recognition that different communities will be at different stages of readiness to accept telecommunication technology and implementation of what some consider priority needs across all communities may well be ineffective and potentially lead to inappropriate public perceptions.

5. A State based approach to allocation of funds may not work as well as allowing "communities of interest" based approach, which may well not be geographically specific. For example, need to provide indigenous friendly communication "meeting places" in capital cities or major regional cities so that community members temporarily visiting those locations for personal reasons, such as health and education can be supported by high quality multimedia communication technology to their relatives and other support people in remote lands.



6. Another example would be to provide capital city locations set up for remote indigenous people to assist them with locating information, places, people and services whilst on temporary visits.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, SA DECS believe that it is important that the process of allocation of funds under the Backing Indigenous Ability program recognise the fundamental importance of the following:

1. Indigenous community consultation is an essential aspect;
2. At least two phases are necessary, viz. a round of identifying and documenting the potential projects, which may then be prioritised, followed by a round of funding applications; and
3. Training and development is an essential element of providing on-going sustainability.

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