



Senator Pauline Hanson
One Nation Senator for Queensland

24th October 2016

Minister for Communications
Senator Mitch Fifield
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Fifield

I have recently returned from a visit to Norfolk Island where I was able to gain an insight into the issues and opportunities that currently exist for that community. Although there are a range of actions required that have emerged from the visit, there is an urgent issue to consider regarding the capacity of the island's communications and connectivity with the rest of the world, hence this letter to your office.

The island is seeking Australian Government support to connect to an undersea fibre optic cable passing within 100 kilometres of the islands existing communications facilities.

During an infrastructure tour on the island I visited the Norfolk Island Telecommunications facilities and discussed the islands existing infrastructure capacity, as well as the future household, business and tourism related requirements. Norfolk Island Telecom has fibre to the node across the island with a great degree of on-island support infrastructure and nationally certified technical staff ensuring maximum performance out of the existing O3B and TNZI Satellite system, which services the island through the centralised infrastructure and reticulation.

There has been some take-up of the Sky Muster Satellite NBN on the island, however the limitations of this current NBN prevent online business operators from having full functionality. Attached is a letter defining the technical limitations of satellite based NBN in this regard.

Australia and New Zealand are soon to be linked through a new undersea cable installed and operated by "Hawiki Submarine Cable", this cable passes within 100 kilometres of Norfolk Island and significant enquiry and effort has been put into evaluating this fibre optic connection for the island to future-proof the island communications and technology needs.

The undersea cable engineering and manufacture process has begun, however there still exists a very small window of opportunity for Norfolk Island to connect if the Australian Government is able to assist either financially or through an underwriting agreement, such as the precedent set by the Norfolk Island/Air New Zealand underwriting agreement, which secures air travel to and from the island.

I am aware of private sector interest and capacity to fund the connection of the cable, however they are seeking some guarantee that the connection will be supported, rather than excluded by the NBN presence on the island. Initial evaluation of the underwriting option indicates a possible win-win for the island and Australia, not only would the connection enable greater economic development opportunities for the island, generating local revenues to reduce financial dependence upon Australia, there are many services that would benefit the private and public sectors and ensure full operational capacity – for example the AFP requirement for 3G or better communications on the island.

Attached is documentation demonstrating the cost effectiveness of the fibre optic cable as well as a comparative analysis identifying the shortfalls in satellite communications, seriously hindering the islands current and future ICT capacity.

Minister my request to you is; How can we discuss and advance an underwriting or supportive process to ensure the island does not miss out on this fibre optic connectivity to Australia and the rest of the world?

Yours sincerely

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