



**GET CONNECTED**

P.O. Box 477, Mowbray

## GET CONNECTED COMMUNITY INTERNET SURVEY REPORT: MAY 2011

### Background

**The proposed NBN broadband service for Dilston, Windermere, Swan Bay and Hillwood has been designated as ‘fixed wireless’.**

**Some members of the community have expressed dissatisfaction with this proposal, and are actively seeking that our area in the East Tamar Valley be given the fibre optic connection.**

**It was decided that the democratic approach would be to seek the opinions of the community as a whole.**

As a result, a survey was conducted as a community initiative to gauge the community’s awareness of the NBN and to ascertain the generally preferred broadband connection in the NBN rollout. The survey also captures home internet usage, both personal and work related.

The survey, conducted in April 2011, was designed by members of the community and distributed to households as an insert in the free local bi-monthly community newspaper *Smoke Signals*.

The survey results represent the opinions and experiences of **225** home internet users residing in Dilston, Windermere, Swan Bay, Hillwood and Mount Direction.

In that same issue of *Smoke Signals* an informational article appeared enumerating the facts as defined by the NBN. Care was taken that both this article and the survey were unbiased and did not in any way express or endorse the views of the Get Connected Committee.

A sample survey form appears as Appendix A.

Of 900 survey forms printed, 704 were distributed and of those 94 were completed and returned (representing 225 residents).

## SUMMARY

### NBN survey offers strong case for fibre optic for East Tamar Valley residents

#### We like the NBN

**77.6%** reported fibre optic was their preferred choice, **though the majority think communication about the NBN could have been handled better.** More than 90% felt NBN communication has been poor.

#### We're a 'connected' community

- **98.9%** of respondents have one or more home computers connected to the internet.
- **50%** have 2 or more computers, and 21.2% also have Smart phones.

#### Most rely heavily on broadband

- **98%** say it is indispensable, very important or important for their personal lives.
- **62.8%** say their home internet connection is indispensable, very important or important for conducting their business.
- **72.3%** say they use the internet *at home* 1-4 hours per day (in addition to internet use at another workplace).
- **13.8%** are online *at home* 5-6 hours per day (in addition to internet use at another workplace).

Email tops the list of activities, followed by banking, research/study, news & sports, buying, selling, and education.

Least prevalent was 'watch videos', likely because most respondents (almost 65%) have the slower ADSL1 (at the time of the survey ADSL2 was available only in Hillwood) and/or have fixed download limits.

#### Many in our community work extensively online

Asked about home internet used for business/work related activities:

- **37.2%** said they use it to communicate with suppliers/distributors.
- **41.5%** said they use it for market research.
- **19%** said they use it for sales.

#### Ours is a 'savvy' community

**52%** of respondents who use home broadband for business activities are engaged in 'smart' professions. Asked what kind of home business or work activity they engage in:

- **33% Telework and education** topped the list, followed by
- **13.8% IT/technical**
- **9.6% Agriculture/orchards**
- **7.4% Tourism**
- **5.3% Design**
- **2.5% Writing**

### **Most would like faster speed and reduced costs**

- **82%** said they would like to improve the speed of their connection
- **65%** want lower cost or better value for money
- **36%** want greater upload/download quotas
- **47%** want better reliability

### **We're the ones the Government is looking for**

**Our demographics demonstrate that the East Tamar is a good 'fit' for the Government's strategy to make e-health and other online services easily accessible:**

- **21%** over 65 years of age
- **38%** aged between 51-65
- **15%** are 36-50
- **26%** under 35

### **Negatives created by NBN rollout uncertainty**

#### **Business plans on hold**

Asked 'do you have any plans for new business propositions or expansion that might involve high-speed broadband?' as many as **18%** of those using their home internet for business report that they are waiting to see what happens with the NBN, while almost **10%** said they would not invest without having fibre optic.

#### **Many still confused about the future of the NBN**

Asked what they had heard was planned for their area vis-à-vis the NBN, even though the latest issue of the community newspaper, *Smoke Signals*, featured an informational article about the proposed NBN service for the area, 20% said they did not know, and another 10% reported incorrectly; however, 70% correctly identified that the proposed connection would be Fixed Wireless.

#### **Major concern: Decommissioning of the copper landlines and its implications**

In this area mobile phones are grossly unreliable. Dropout problems and power outages also cause difficulties.

Understandably, therefore, the majority of respondents (**over 90%**) reported they were concerned about future loss of quality and/or thought it would mean loss of service. Feelings of vulnerability were expressed. About one-third said they would like to know more.

## Recent developments

Since the survey was completed, and while the report was being prepared, Telstra announced (9 May 2011) that the Dilston exchange, serving Dilston and Windermere, had been upgraded, and that ADSL2+ connections would shortly become available.

**Get Connected** emailed Michael Patterson, General Manager, Telstra Country Wide Northern Tasmania to seek clarification.

GC: Having made this financial commitment now to upgrade the Dilston exchange, how long do you envisage our ADSL2+ service being operational, given the future de-commissioning of the copper landlines under Telstra's agreement with NBN Co. And is the future cessation of ADSL an absolute foregone conclusion?

*MP: Too early to tell. Your (sic) best placed to identify what Tas NBN's plans are regarding the build out of its network.*

GC: In your media release you say, 'Telstra's networks are supported by a proven roadmap of innovation and investment. We have been able to develop this roadmap thanks to the close working relationships we have with our local communities.'

Does this suggest that Telstra took notice of the plight of Dilston/Windermere/Hillwood residents as reported by Get Connected, in deciding to prioritise the Telstra upgrade to our exchange? If this is the case, we applaud your awareness of our community concerns.

*MP: Our teams are connected to the local communities in which we live and our business is to determine where sufficient demand is for investment. Dilston has demonstrated demand for this product.*

## GET CONNECTED COMMUNITY INTERNET SURVEY REPORT: IN DETAIL

Of the 704 surveys delivered, 94 surveys (13.4%), representing 225 residents who are internet users, were completed and returned.

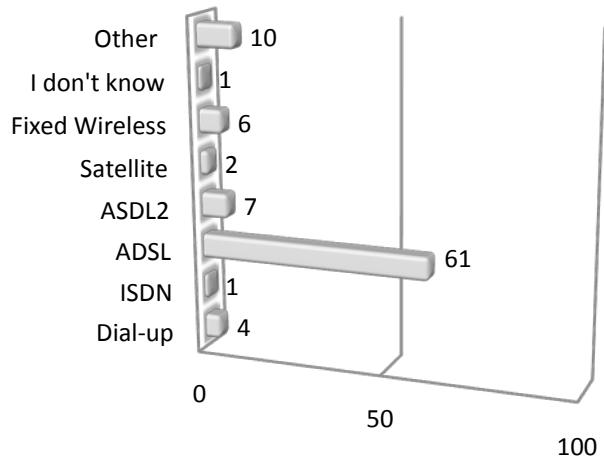
**Most residents in the area have ADSL, the majority being ADSL1, based on availability.**

64.8% or 61 reported that they currently have ADSL.

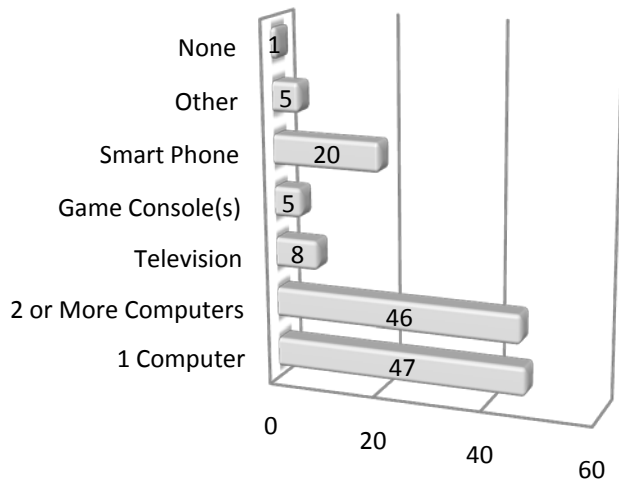
**Most of the residents are connected to the internet**

98.9% said they currently have one or more computers connected to the Internet and 21.2% (20) also have a smart phone connected and under other several noted mobile wireless.

**What Internet connection do you have now?**

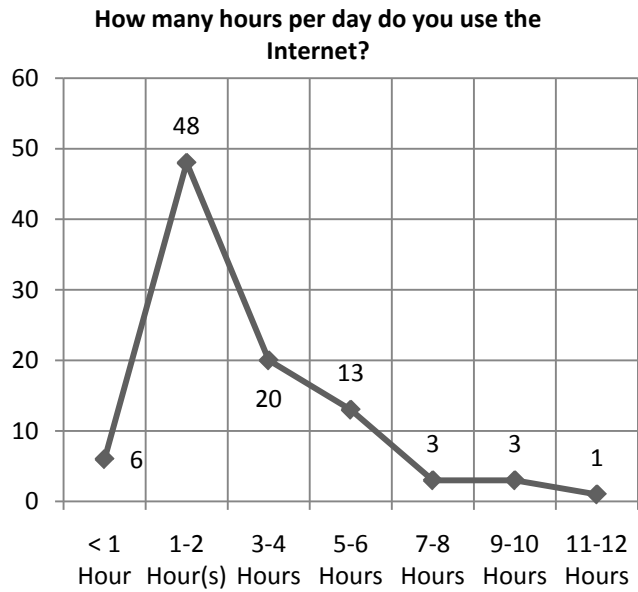


**What devices in your house are connected to the Internet?**



**Most use the Internet *at home* at least 1-4 hours a day**

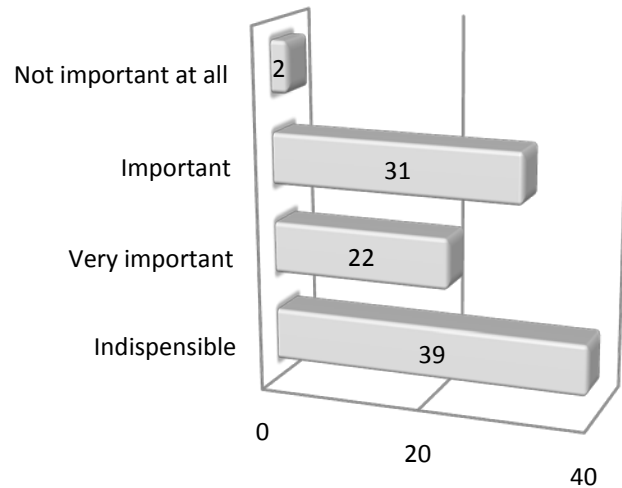
72.3% (68) say they **use the Internet at home 1-4 hours per day**; of those 13.8% (13) use it 5-6 hours per day.



**A large majority say their home Internet connection is important to them for life and work**

98% (92) report that their home Internet is important, very important or indispensable, and of those 41.5% (39) reported it is **indispensable**.

**How important is your home Internet connection to you for your personal life?**

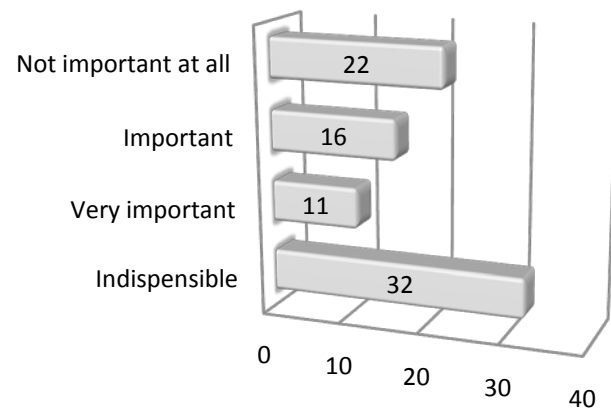


**Home Internet business use**

Similarly, of the 94 surveys returned, 59 (62.8%) report that their home Internet is important, very important or indispensable.

34% (32) say it is **indispensable** for their business.

**How important is your home Internet connection to you for your business?**



### Over half dissatisfied with speed

52.1% (49) reported that they were dissatisfied or totally dissatisfied with their current speed.

At time of the survey ADSL1 was the primary broadband connection (ADSL2+ not being available at the Dilston/Windermere exchange).

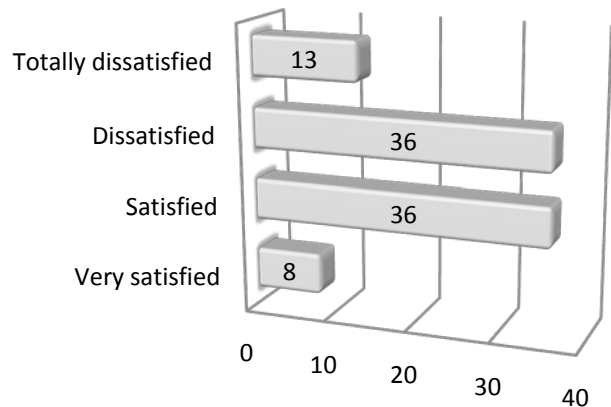
### Reliability also an issue

32% (30) reported that they were dissatisfied or totally dissatisfied with their Internet reliability.

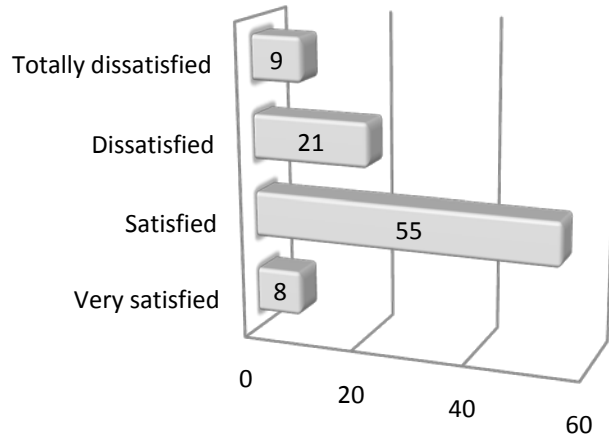
### Most want faster speed and reduced cost

82% (77) said they would like to improve the speed of their connection, more than 65% the cost, almost 47% the reliability and well over one-third (36.2% or 34) the upload/download quotas.

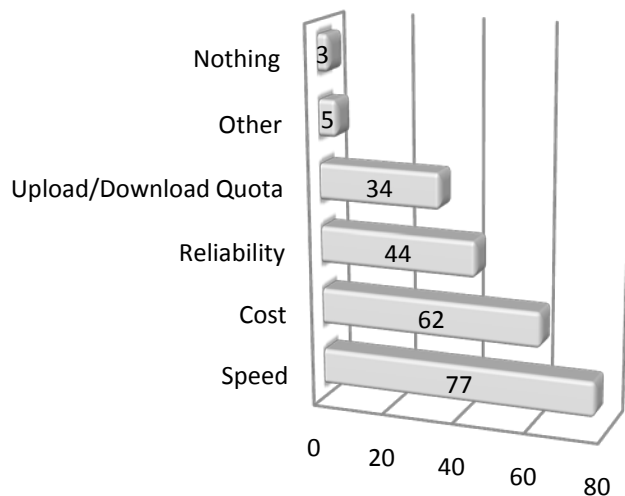
#### How satisfied are you with your current Internet speed?



#### How satisfied are you with your current Internet reliability?



#### What would you like to improve about your Internet connect, if you could?



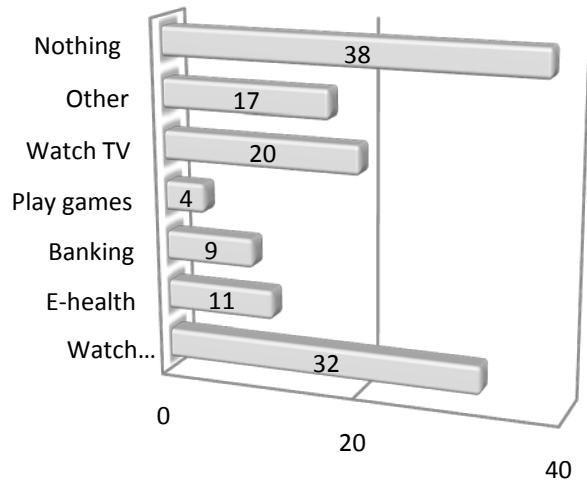
**Projected usage with an improved broadband connection:**

When asked what they would do if their connection were improved:

- 34% (32) said they would watch movies,
- 11.7% (11) said they would avail themselves of e-health, and
- 9.6% (9) would do banking.

In addition, 18.1% (17) reported they would pursue other things such as education, community projects, podcasts.

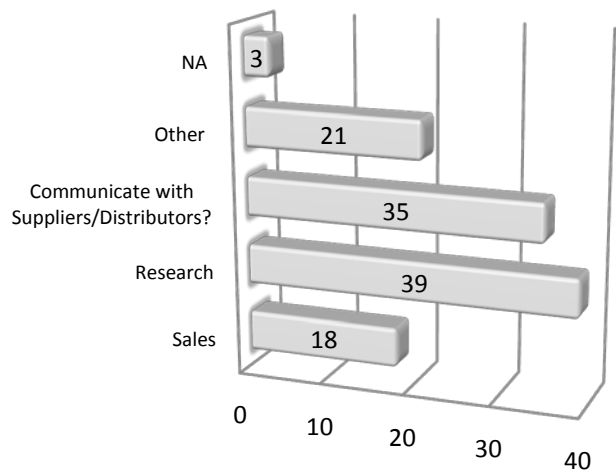
**If your Internet connection were improved, what would you do that you cannot do now?**



**Home internet important business tool:**

When asked about using their home Internet for business, of the 94 surveys returned (representing 225 residents), 41.5% (39) said they use it for research, more than 37.2% (35) to communicate with suppliers/distributors, and 19.1% (18) for sales. In addition 22.3% (21) noted under 'other' that they use it for education, e-health, transferring large files including CAD files, etc.

**What do you use your home Internet for? (for business)**

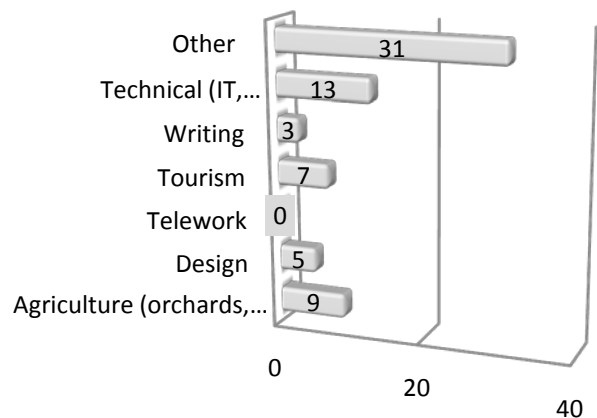


**Education, telework and technical occupations a feature of survey:**

Asked what kind of home business they operate

- 13.8% (13) said technical,
- 9.6% (9) reported agriculture,
- 7.4% (7) tourism,
- 5.3% (5) design, and
- 33% (31), under 'other' noting education, telework, transport, forestry, investment, etc).

**What kind of home business do you operate?**

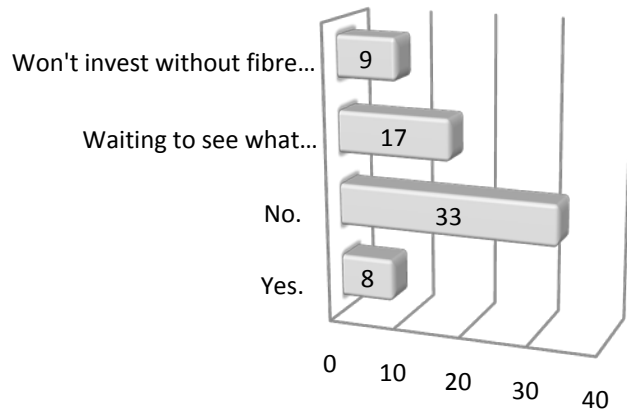


**Many of those using it for business are waiting to see what will happen**

Asked if they had plans for their business,

- 8.5% (8) reported yes, but
- 18.1% (17 reported that they were waiting to see what would happen with the NBN. and
- 9.6% (9) of all respondents to the survey) that they would not invest without having fibre optic

**Do you have any plans for new business propositions or expansion that might involve high-speed broadband?**

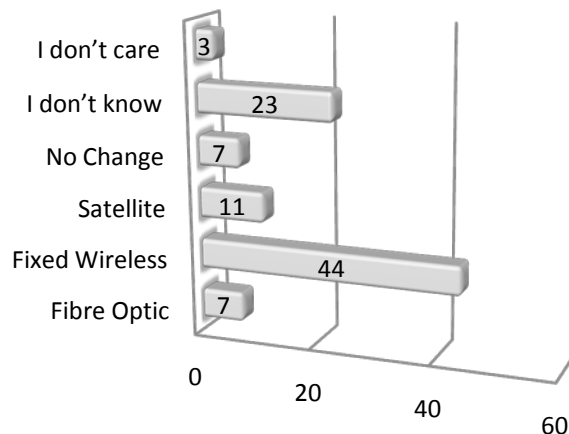


**NBN Co has failed to get the message across:**

Asked what they had heard was planned for their area vis-a-vis the NBN, approximately one-third did not know.

Of the 94 surveys returned (225 residents) almost 25% (23) reported that they did not know and another 7.4% (7) said fibre optic, so they also did not know.

**For the upcoming NBN roll-out for your area, what have you heard you will be getting?**

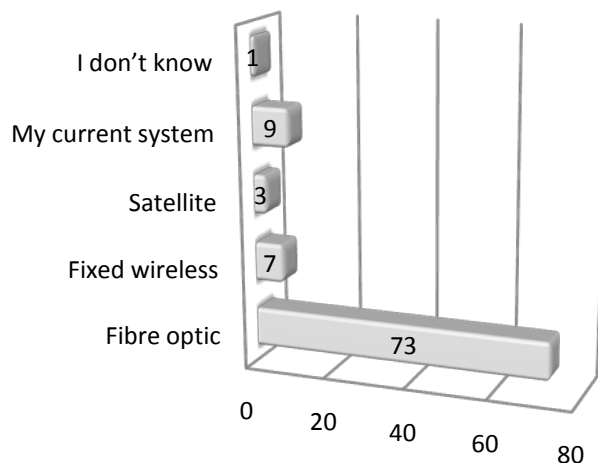


**The vast majority want fibre optic**

In contrast, asked what their preference would be for their connection to the NBN, 77.7% said fibre optic (73 of the 94 surveys returned representing 225 residents).

Interestingly another 9 (9.6%) said they would prefer their current plan (which, if it is ADSL1 or ADSL2+, would become impossible if the copper lines are decommissioned).

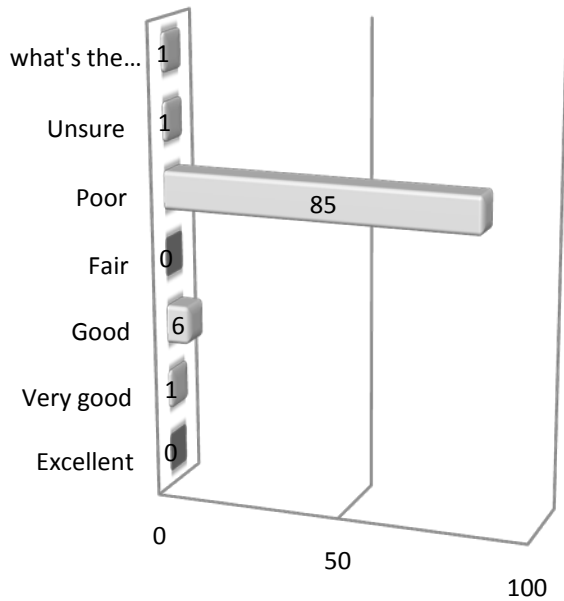
**What would your preference be of the above?**



**Most rated NBN communication poor**

More than 90% rated the NBN Co’s communication about the rollout as poor (85 of 94 surveys). Another respondent reported that they did not know what the NBN was. While 7 (7.4%) said they thought it good or very good, an examination of the 7 revealed that 1 said that they did not know what type of connection they would get, 3 said they did not care what type of connection they would get, 1 erroneously believed they were getting fibre optic, and 1 attributed the good information to the local newsletter *Smoke Signals*. Adding 6 to the 85 who reported the communication was poor would give us a figure of 91 or 96.8%.

**How would you rate the NBN Co’s communication of information to you about the roll-out?**

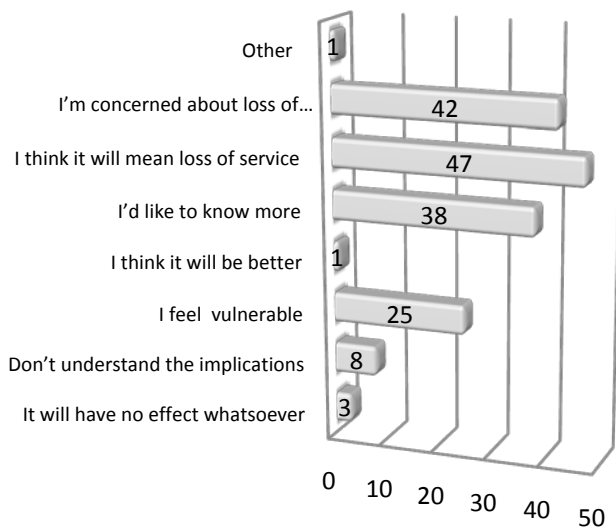


**There appears to be a lot of concern about decommissioning their copper landlines**

When asked how they felt about their copper landlines being decommissioned, the vast majority reported that they were concerned about loss of quality (dropouts) and/or thought it would mean loss of service and/or would like to know more and/or felt vulnerable.

Only one of the 94 surveys (a little over 1%) said they thought it would be better and 3 (just over 3%) reported they thought it would have no effect whatsoever.

**When, as proposed, the current copper landlines are decommissioned, that will mean you will lose your ADSL and current phone line. What do you feel about this?**

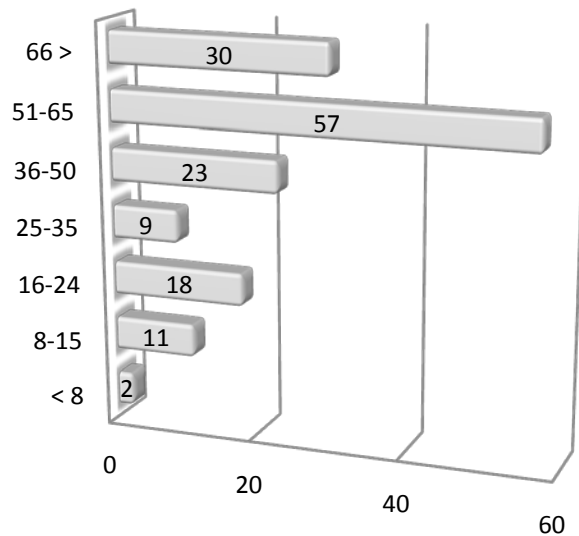


### Demographic profile

Most computer users in these households (87 of 150 users or 58%) are 51 and older (of these, 57 or 38% are between 51 and 65), the precise demographics that the government is targeting strategically for e-health and other online government services.

Approximately 26% (40 of the 150 users) are 35 and under; and 23 of the 150 users (just over 15%) are 36 to 50.

What age groups are the users?



### Get Connected endorses PM Julia Gillard's statement at the mainland launch of the NBN (Armidale)

"It stands to radically change the way we live, the way we work, the way we study – especially in rural and regional Australia which has been so often forced to put up with second best," Ms Gillard said.

According to Tony Windsor, MP, "There was a high degree of enthusiasm for the concept."

Mr Windsor said the technology had the capacity to "reverse the paradigm" of distance and remoteness that country Australians had lived in for decades.

"Distance will be irrelevant in terms of education, health aged care, business opportunities," he said.

These are all the arguments Get Connected, as proponents of NBN's high-speed fibre optic broadband, has been making and which we now clearly demonstrate have our community support.<sup>1</sup>

*The Australian*, 18 May 2011

<sup>1</sup> It is understood, however, that if the East Tamar is switched from ADSL1 or ADSL2+ to fixed wireless, it would mean a step backwards for the community in terms of broadband speed and reliability.

## COMMENTS

The survey included a comments box for respondents to note any issues of concerns.

Note that the following comments are not necessarily the opinions of the Get Connected group. They are simply the verbatim comments supplied by survey respondents.

### **Anger about broken promises**

- We expect the political parties to honour promises made re NBN at last election
- If fibre optic is good enough for some, it should be good enough for us all
- Please give us whatever you can to make life wonderful. Honour the promise – we believed you!!!
- We would love to have fibre to the home – as proposed by the NBN!

### **Concerns about discrimination against regions**

- The East Tamar is being condemned to being second class and not business friendly if NBN is excluded. Lack of NBN will impact on growth and property values of East Tamar.
- Restraint of trade should be pursued by residents with business if they are excluded from NBN.
- Discrimination on the basis of geographical isolation is no excuse for failure to provide FTTH/FTTP.
- This is exactly the type of area that needs fibre optic so that we can avail ourselves of e-health, e-banking: remote, ageing population. What is the government thinking?
- It is absolutely absurd that Dilston, Windermere etc are only 5-10 minutes away from the planned fibre optic in Ltn yet the NBN will not provide these communities with the premium service.
- The NBN rollout sounds a bit like the Optus [?] rollout – in that it really only is a rollout to populated areas and creates a second class system in all others. I am unsure as to how this really addresses independent MPs' concerns for rural and remote Australians and why they supported it. The benefits attached to the NBN have not been effectively communicated by the government and it seems that the government funding of such a project should be directed towards meeting our most basic needs.
- I don't understand why people living in our area should be continuously discriminated against by the Launceston Council, Telstra, etc. What about bus service, sewerage, roads, slow internet service, etc etc. We pay our rates too in case the councillors haven't noticed!
- How can we live so close to Launceston and not [be] serviced by the best option?!?
- For as long as we've had an internet connection, other than dialup, we've had to pay more for an inferior service.
  - ISDN  $\leftrightarrow$  ADSL (not available here due to distance from exchange [Swan Bay])
  - wireless broadband  $\leftrightarrow$  ADSL (not available here due to distance from exchange)

- Our present internet connection is a USB stick. We are too far away from the Dilston exchange to be connected [Swan Bay]
- I think we have been lied to about the NBN's coverage and availability to the majority of the population. I consider this area to have reasonable population density and future population growth to warrant the same services as most other connections will have.

### **Concerns about quality of wireless**

- We have satellite TV and this loses signal at times; am concerned that this is what will happen with satellite internet.
- Expect service be improved rather than go backward
- Proposed fixed wireless service for the Dilston area is at best a poor man's ADSL2 service.
- Shocked to read my speed will actually drop with planned solution for my area. With a Uni lecturer and a Uni student in the house a high speed connection is vital nowadays

### **Concerns about decommissioning copper landlines**

- If we can't have fibre optic why can't we just have our existing service?
- I would rather have what I have than fixed wireless as what I have now is better.
- I think it stinks that we will lose our landline telephones and be forced to use dearer mobiles
- Phone lines will no longer be usable during a power cut
- Government do not leave us an option anyway if they are going to decommission the copper landlines we have to pay out or else!!
- Also with the removal of copper wire and therefore landline options, it forces us to use cordless mobile phones and expose us to higher levels of electromagnetic radiation without choice. There is still an enormous amount of research yet to be done on the safety of exposure to EMRs in relation to cancer or our health generally.

### **Concerns with communication process**

- Why isn't the NBN rollout more politicised and open with all Tasmanians?
- Shocked to read my speed will actually drop with planned solution for my area. With a Uni lecturer and a Uni student in the house a high speed connection is vital nowadays
- We need more information on the detail of the fibre optic and wireless proposals
- Other than information provided by Smoke Signals, we would know nothing about the repercussions for Windermere.
- I think the NBN has been poorly communicated to the public and the effects of decommissioning copper landlines has been hidden from the general public who are not as IT literate as those upon whom the NBN debacle will have most effect
- NBN Co should have Regional Liaison Officers to communicate with local communities so that people will know what the timelines of the rollout will be in their

area OR they should have a system online where you can enter your postcode and get up-to-date reports to each area. A feedback system would be even better

### **Those who think it will all cost too much**

- While I would like a faster Internet I do not see the need for fibre optic – paying \$43B for people to play games is unjustifiable. Bring on wireless – nearly as fast, more versatile and cheaper [and probably more reliable]
- Do not agree with costs of NBN. The taxpayers money could be spent where it is needed more, such as hospitals, schools, the elderly, infrastructure, etc. Can't imagine the majority of people need it or even want it. help our own people and country with the NBN money, supply satellite or wireless.
- I consider fibre optic rollout far too expensive for the tax payer at this time. Concern that it may lack competition cost may spiral to recover investment. “wholesale price” [??], government . . . cannot be trusted. \$30 odd BILLION into fixed wireless or less (may??) prove effective as new technology is developed
- I believe NBN a gross waste of taxpayers (sic) monies
- If the cost is more than \$1 per day I may choose to opt out
- The “rollout” is going to send this country more bankrupt than it already is – don't trust Labor economics – very concerned – Hopefully it will never happen under this Government

### **Misc**

- More annoyed by lack of digital TV reception!
- We choose to live in a semi rural area and by doing so accept limits on our access to first rate shops, restaurants, medical facilities and a whole range of other services. If our need for them is great enough we should consider moving to locations that have what we need

### **Thanks to Get Connected**

- Thank you for doing this!
- Thanks to those who have organised this survey. I look forward to seeing the results and outcomes
- Well done on this survey. Hope there are heaps of replies. And go Get Connected!
- Thanks for the information and effort in putting this out.
- The information about this has been very very poor. Thank you for bringing it to our attention.
- Thanks to the Smoke Signals team!!

## APPENDIX A

### East Tamar Community Internet Survey:

A community initiative seeking to reflect your views and needs. Please complete by April 20.

1. What kind of internet connection do you have now?

- |                                  |                                |   |                                       |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dial-up | <input type="checkbox"/> ADSL  | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ISDN    | <input type="checkbox"/> ASDL2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Wireless | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know |

2. What devices in your house are connected to the Internet?

- |  |   |                                      |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 computer          | <input type="checkbox"/> Your television(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or more computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Game console/s     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other       |

3. What do you use the internet for? (tick all that apply)

- |   |                                     |  |                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email          | <input type="checkbox"/> Selling    | <input type="checkbox"/> News & sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Browsing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking    | <input type="checkbox"/> Skype         | (Facebook,                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research/study | <input type="checkbox"/> Education  | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch videos  | Twitter, etc)                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying         | <input type="checkbox"/> Play games |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |

4. How many hours per day do **you** use the internet? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the total number of hours (approximately) **all members** in your household use the Internet (are online) per day? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How important is your home Internet connection to you for your personal life?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indispensible  | <input type="checkbox"/> Important            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not important at all |

7. How essential is your home Internet connection to you for your business?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indispensible | <input type="checkbox"/> Very important       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Important     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not important at all |

8. How satisfied are you with your current Internet speed?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied      | <input type="checkbox"/> Totally dissatisfied |

9. How satisfied are you with your current Internet reliability?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied      | <input type="checkbox"/> Totally dissatisfied |

10. What would you like to improve about your Internet connection, if you could?

- |                                |                               |                                      |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliability |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|

- Other \_\_\_\_\_  Upload/download quota

11. If your Internet connection were improved (faster or more reliable or had a larger download), what would you do that you cannot do now?

- Watch movies  Banking  Watch TV  
 E-health  Play games  Other  
 Nothing

**Business use:**

12. What do you use your home internet for (for business)?

- Sales  Communicate with suppliers/distributors?  
 Research  Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. What kind of home business do you operate? (tick all that apply)

- Agriculture (orchards, vineyards etc)  Telework  Technical (IT, engineering, drafting)  
 Design  Tourism  Writing  Other

14. Do you have any plans for new business propositions or expansion that might involve high-speed broadband? (tick all that apply)

- Yes  Waiting to see what happens with NBN  
 No  Won't invest without fibre-optic

**The NBN:**

15. For the upcoming NBN roll-out for your area, what have you heard you will be getting? (please tick one answer only)

- Fibre optic  Satellite  I don't know  
 Fixed wireless  No change  I don't care

16. What would your preference be of the above? (please tick one answer only)

- Fibre optic  Fixed wireless  Satellite  
 My current system  I don't know

17. How would you rate the NBN Co's communication of information to you about the rollout?

- Excellent  Good  What's the NBN?  
 Very good  Poor

18. When, as proposed, the current copper landlines are decommissioned, that will mean you will lose your ADSL and current phone line. What do you feel about this?

- It will have no effect whatsoever
- Don't understand the implications
- I feel vulnerable
- I think it will be better

- I'd like to know more
- I think it will mean loss of service
- I'm concerned about loss of quality (dropouts)
- Other

### **Demographics (about you):**

19a. How many people are there in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

19b. How many of those use the Internet at home? \_\_\_\_\_

19c. What age groups are the users? (please tick all that apply)

- |                                |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8-15  | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-   |

19d. What area do you live in?

- Dilston
- Windermere
- Hillwood
- Swan Bay
- Mount Direction
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you have any other comments?

**PLEASE PLACE YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY FORM IN THE BOX MARKED: EAST TAMAR COMMUNITY INTERNET SURVEY AT WINDERMERE CORNER STORE NO LATER THAN APRIL 20.**

**This survey is a community initiative. Its purpose is to reflect your views and needs. It's important that you participate.**

**The results of this survey will be compiled and the information distributed to NBN Co, and the Standing Committee for Infrastructure and Communication Inquiry, as well as the media and local politicians. It will also be published in *Smoke Signals*. And it will be viewable on the Get Connected website <http://tvnbnc.wetpaint.com/>**

**Acknowledgments: Michael Ferguson, MP, Shadow Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology; Ivan Dean MLC, Independent Member for Windermere, for their contributions to cover printing costs.**