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MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Mr Gillon

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PALMERSTON ACT 2913

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Dear Mr Gillon

Thank you for your second letter to me about poor broadband services in Gungahlin. I apologise for not replying earlier.

When Gungahlin was first developed I remember it was promoted as the connected community for the future and it is a pity that successive ACT governments have not delivered on that promise. I will ask the current government what it is doing to ensure that new developments get better internet connections. I'll start off in the current round of annual report hearings that the Legislative Assembly committee's are holding. I am the deputy chair of the Planning committee and we will be examining the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) on 11 December so I can ask the ACTPLA what they are doing to ensure your problems are not perpetuated in new developments.

However, it would seem that the ACT government is aware of the issue of poor connections in Gungahlin and with RIM technology. I understand that the most recent suburbs have some better connections. You may want to look at the FAQ for the new suburb of Crace which is being developed by a joint venture including the ACT government. It is at http://www.crace.com.au/resources/pdfs/FAQs_221009.pdf and says

Q: Where does the 'fibre' from Transact's Fibre to the Home service come from? Does it run straight from the Crace exchange to each terrace or is it from a RIM? If it is the latter, how many homes are there per rim?

A. The cables are run from the main equipment in the TransACT Gateway site that is to be built in the nearby suburb of Forde. TransACT services are not delivered from the Crace exchange (this is Telstra), nor do TransACT use rim technology as they cannot deliver the high speed services or IPTV and Voice and Free to Air RF overlay using RIM. TransACTs FTTH solution is a state-of-the-art passive optical network solution, as such the fibres from the gateway are split at Local Convergence Points (LCP) throughout the Crace Estate. At this point each home is connected via a fibre. To maximise the available data bandwidth to each home TransACT design a 1 to 32 split at the LCP, which means one fibre from the TransACT gateway equipment is split into 32 individual drops at the LCP. The only active equipment in the network is at the TransACT gateway and the home, in between there is no powered equipment.

I will also write to General Manager of Telstra Country Wide, ACT – Chris Taylor and Senator Conroy about the issue.

I'm not sure what else I can do with respect to your particular situation because Telstra is a private company and the federal government has responsibility for telecommunications not the ACT government. It might be worthwhile contacting Graham Downie at the Sunday Canberra Times because he does often run stories about consumers not getting what they deserve. I understand that you have already explored options with respect to the telecommunications ombudsman. I imagine you are also aware of the possibility of using wireless broadband connections which may provide better service in your location. I'm sure you are also aware of the national broadband network which may at sometime in the future provide you and other Gunghalin residents with better connections.

Thank you for drawing this matter to my attention.

Caroline L e Couteur
ACT Green member for Molonglo