

GunSmoke

Edition 125 March 2013

Designed by JM Publishing

Topics for March

- Community Services Directorate Harrison (Block 14 Section 2) for a new supportive housing model – for people with a disability, (Project Independence).
- Proposed upgrades to the RFS facility, within the Joint Emergency Service Centre (JESC). Presentation will give a brief over view of the ESA Station upgrade & relocation strategy & the proposed upgrade at the JESC.
- Purdon & Associates to present on plans to develop block opposite College.
- Belconnen Arts Centre servicing Gungahlin needs.

Next meeting: Wednesday 13 March 7.30pm at Gungahlin Library

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GunSmoke is produced to allow
residents to keep in touch with their local
community.

It enables people to express views on a
range of topics that do not necessarily
represent the opinion of the editor, or
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“Gungahlin Smoke Signals”

From the President

Development in the Gungahlin Town Centre has for many years seemed to progress slowly. GCC advocates for progress, gets tempted with opportunities, receives notification of development interest, waits for confirmation, observes announcements, awaits commencement of project work & finally sees project completion. Typical periods of waiting can extend to 5-10 years.

Yet we see developments in the airport precinct & now in Tuggeranong and Belconnen taking literally months to go through a similar process.

The Leisure Centre took at least 5 years & several iterations before a satisfactory solution was reached. We now have a hole lined with concrete & expect to wait until mid to late 2014 before making the 1st splash!

A cinema complex has been on the wishlist for even longer yet the whispers are that a possible announcement will not be made until June/July. As for completion date – who knows?

Light Rail is promised for 2016 & the need to dig up Hibberson street may defer the development work to create a ‘shared zone’ pedestrian-friendly precinct that will add much needed life to the main street.

GCC has identified local employment opportunities as a key requirement to stimulate additional commercial development in the Town Centre. At last we have a commitment to build an office block to house 500-600 ACT public servants but at least one more office block of a similar or larger size is essential to foster broader commercial development.

At present focus seems to be placed on improving roads to channel Gungahlin residents outside the district to service the bulk of their employment, entertainment, shopping & lifestyle needs. Yet more residential sites

are being developed resulting in a significantly increased population base without the full range of services & facilities needed by a satellite region (that should be largely self-sustaining).

Positive Developments

The new oval is grassed & recently had its 1st cut. Parking areas are well under way but no grandstand or user facilities have been commenced. So it is still a restricted work site! The Valley Wetlands are nearing completion with final landscaping underway. The many feathered residents have signalled their approval by a significant increase in numbers & variety.

The Health Centre is fully functional but certainly could be upgraded to 'enhanced' status with further consideration of a nurse walk in facility being added.

Construction work is well underway in Nicholls for the new Catholic College & the aged persons facility in Ngunnawal on the Gold Creek Homestead site.

Construction of the continuous wall of apartments & units continues along Flemington Road.

Local hassles

Well over 15 months ago we raised the issue of the size & appropriateness of the main 1st Choice Liquor sign that is highly noticeable as you enter the Town Centre from the Flemington Road end. The matter has been listed for response several times on the ESDD Planning & Development Forum agenda. But zero re-sponse to date! The sign, in fact one of three on the premises, does not appear to comply with the size limitations in the Signs Code as it seems to exceed the 2mx3m maximum for signs of that nature. Some residents questioned the 'appropriateness' of a large sign advertising alcohol as the most prominent advertising feature viewable on approaching Gungahlin. This is a separate issue – also unresolved (perhaps filed in the "too hard" basket!).

Nearby, the issue of safety associated with the intersection of Hinder & Hibberson Streets has also been 'on the agenda' for resolution for over a year. Community representatives & local business people met with the Chief Minister & a sizeable delegation from ACT Roads to seek a solution – but still no response! We had hoped that the deliberations about the proposed "shared zone" for Hibberson Street might have provided both interim & longer term solutions. Now that process has been 'put on hold' because the longer term Light Rail planning issues have taken precedence.

In fact there is a strong view that the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment & the associated upgrading of commercial entertainment facilities is far more important to the local population in the short term. It would be unfortunate if the revitalisation of Hibberson Street was deferred until 2016 or later pending completion of the Light Rail project.

A number of businesses & residents in the section of Anthony Rolfe Ave adjoining the Town Centre have expressed concern about the lack of parking along that stretch of road. Recently some residents have received parking tickets because of time limitations on the parking spaces adjacent to the businesses. This problem will only get worse when Anthony Rolfe Ave assumes its expected role as the major Northside diversion route (from Flemington Road) around the Town Centre.

Road Developments

It was interesting to learn about the process affecting road developments & upgrades. The issue needs to get on a priority list for consideration. Those issues high on the priority list then require a funding allocation for design work. Once approved for design work the project may involve some form of public consultation to draw out key issues from a user or resident's perspective.

However completion of the project is not yet guaranteed as the substantial sums for project costs have to go into a bidding process against dozens of similar projects around Canberra. Only once funding for the project has been secured through the annual budgetary process can commencement of the project be assured. Even then this funding can be provided in stages so that a full project may take several stages to complete.

The key message is that Gungahlin residents need to maintain pressure on the politicians to retain priority listing for much needed road works & to redouble that effort to ensure that funding is included in the forthcoming Budget.

We cannot sit back expectantly after a 'project' has been announced in the hope that the project will be completed in the normal course of events. Other communities have been very successful in getting their issues 'upgraded' & commenced by making considerable 'noise'.

We cannot afford 'to rest on our laurels' as experience has shown that 'promised' developments in Gungahlin generally take many years to eventuate.

Community Input

If you have an issue with developments or lack thereof in Gungahlin you can access a variety of processes to try to get a response.

Issues like abandoned vehicles, noise pollution, graffiti, streetlight issues, damaged footpaths & cycle paths, potholes, illegal dumping can be reported directly to the relevant ACT Govt department via Canberra Con-nect phone 13 22 81 or at canberraconnect.act.gov.au.

Time to Talk: www.timetotalk.act.gov.au

Fix my Street: <http://www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au/Services/f/fix-my-street>

Chief Minister Talkback on ABC radio 666 on Friday mornings after 9.00 am

Twitter cabinet (watch for notices when these are to be held).

GCC Facebook: Go to www.gcc.asn.au & register.

GCC 2013 Meeting Schedule

March 13 See Page 1.

Also : Negotiating with Canberra Airport (maybe April/May/June) & Minister Shane Rattenbury.

April 10 Planning & Development (1) with Roads update

May 8 TBA

June 12 Roads & Transport (2)

July 9 TBA

August 14 Planning & Development (2)

September 11 AGM

October 9 Roads & Transport (3)

November 13 TBA

December 11 Planning & Development (3)

(We wish to provide a program with set regular updates (3 times per year) on the key issues affecting Gungahlin residents Roads & Transport and Planning & Development.

These will be featured on 'even numbered' months. Meetings on odd numbered months will have some presentations as well as open community forums to explore other issues of interest to the community.)

ISSUES LIST compiled by the GCC for the Gungahlin Community

GCC VISION

- GCC seeks adherence to the original concept of self-contained satellite centres serviced by all necessary amenities minimising the need for residents to travel to other centres for work, shopping, services & entertainment.
- Gungahlin still lacks services & amenities necessary to cater effectively for the current, and growing, population.
- Gungahlin needs representation from candidates who live in the area or in nearby suburbs within the two current relevant electorates to have a better affinity in understanding the issues facing local residents & businesses.

The GCC Executive has identified the following issues as the key areas of concern for Gungahlin residents as at mid-February 2013.

The list is on the GGC website to invite community comment. The GCC Executive will represent the community in seeking responses to these issues & will report regularly on progress. (Members of the local community can disagree with the stance adopted by the GCC by submitting their views.) The list will be forwarded to all ACT Legislative Assembly members, ACT Government Directorates & their contributions/responses will be noted.

This list will be regularly updated as issues are progressed & as new issues arise. It formed the basis of commitments to the Gungahlin area sought from candidates for the 2012 ACT Legislative Assembly elections & will provide a template for commitments from those members elected to the current ACT Legislative Assembly.

- Priority: Keep Gungahlin residents aware of developments in their region.

GCC wants an information service (Developments in Your Community), complete with maps, from the ACT Government to advise residents of the type & status of ongoing developments in the area. This will cover roadworks, new constructions (such as new construction around existing sites), the Leisure centre, the enclosed oval, the new ACT Government office block, the 'promised' cinema, the Wetlands project, inaction on the site reserved for bulky goods outlet & any other projects of interest to community members.

CRITICAL ISSUES YET TO BE ADDRESSED

In view of the anticipated substantial growth of Gungahlin over coming years with the settlement of Casey, Kenny, Kinleyside, Bonner & Moncrief there is a need for significant planning consultation on the provision & timely development of facilities for the area to accommodate the requirements of a population likely to exceed 60,000 residents. Transport egress & ingress issues will be of critical importance & the current approach for 'catch-up' or remedial developments will not offer satisfactory solutions in the short-to-medium term.

The Gungahlin Community wants vastly improved communication in respect of upgrades (planning, progress & completion dates) & traffic impact measures in the area. If residents are aware of the type & purpose of establishment & upgrade work being done, plus being advised of likely completion dates, they may be more accommodating of any disruptions to their movements throughout the district & actually look forward to the outcomes.

- GCC retains a preference for a full service hospital, located in Gungahlin, (in the longer term) recognising the needs of Gungahlin residents.

- Focus needs to be placed on significant diverse commercial development to provide employment and shopping opportunities for

Gungahlin residents. Key stakeholders need to be convinced of the value of locating or living in Gungahlin in order to attract new staff!

- Electoral boundaries need to be reconfigured to reflect needs of Gungahlin residents and the continuing rapid growth. The current Electorate footprint, being a combination of Gungahlin with areas of the Inner South and Weston Creek, is not considered to reflect the interests of Gungahlin residents.

- An option is for an expanded Legislative Assembly comprising five electorates – one of which specifically represents the Gungahlin region as it has a discrete critical mass of population with a common set of needs and interests.

- With the development of new suburbs towards the northern extremities of the ACT air traffic noise is likely to be an issue of increasing importance. The GCC favours the upgrade of Canberra Airport to accommodate limited international air traffic & can see merit in the increased (but limited) usage of the airport as a freight hub for the region but is opposed to the suggestion that Canberra Airport should be the 2nd or overflow airport for Sydney. (The GCC favours stronger consideration of a high-speed rail link between Sydney & Melbourne with connections to Canberra to significantly reduce air traffic on the 3rd busiest inter-capital city route in the world (Sydney-Melbourne) thus freeing up capacity at Sydney airport & perhaps deferring the need for another Sydney airport for decades.)

TRANSPORT

Transport continues to be an issue of concern for the Gungahlin Community. No sooner is an upgrade of a key route achieved then residents have to endure remedial action & additional disruptions to feeder roads to be able to cope with a rapidly expanding population. GCC believes that these facilities should have been provided in advance of or in concert with 'known' development procedures. Gungahlin Drive users are faced with a

superior quality road system inhibited by a lower speed limit (90kph) not commensurate with other roads of a similar quality.

Gungahlin residents rely heavily on road access in and out of the region because there are too few employment opportunities, services, entertainment & leisure facilities in the area.

The ACT Government has announced plans to duplicate Gundaroo Drive between the Barton Highway and Mirrabai Drive and has commenced community consultation.

- Allocate priority to the section between Gungahlin Drive and Mirrabai Drive (before the Valley Way extension is completed) – Bus stopping areas contribute to regular vehicle accidents due to single lane traffic. Increased by-pass traffic will exacerbate existing problems.

- Correct bend in alignment of southbound RH lane at junction with Gungahlin Drive to cater for volume of traffic turning right into Gungahlin Drive and to reduce current bottleneck. Increased usage of Gungahlin shopping precinct results in large vehicle build ups with South-bound traffic. Problems occur closer to Service Station section due to lack of pull-off areas (on both sides) for Action buses.

- Current plans feature the installation of traffic lights at the Barton Highway intersection rather than the more expensive solution of a flyover.

- It is likely that noise reduction barriers will be the 1st item of construction along residential areas between Crace and Gundaroo Drive.

- Need to bring forward & allocate funding for Nurdurr Drive extension to Gungahlin Drive. Provide definite commencement & completion dates.

Other transport/road issues include: Construct traffic by-pass routes around the Gungahlin Town Centre to divert the increasing traffic flow from Flemington Road (East – West) and from Bonner & Casey (West – East). This means

significant focus on proposed routes such as Valley Way & Anthony Rolfe Avenue.

- Stagger scheduling of road works so that traffic disruptions are minimised.

Traffic calming measures for eastbound vehicles on Gungahlin Drive approaching Amagula Ave & Lexcen Ave roundabout – alignment draws line-of-sight away from vehicles travelling west & turning into Amagula Ave. Trees in the centre of the roundabout block views of approaching traffic.

HIGH PRIORITY ISSUES

- Urgent need for entertainment facilities such as a cinema complex to service Gungahlin residents. (Preliminary announcements so far but no firm site, developer or tenant).
- Urgent need for facilities to cater for the region's youth particularly after day time facilities are closed.
- Need for secure storage facilities for service organisations (Rotary, Lions) and community groups (Scouts, Guides) to store equipment in a safe local environment.
- Need for more classroom type facilities in the region to cater for after-hours teaching/ instruction programs.

IMPROVED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- Improved access to lake shores (Yerrabi Pond, Gungahlin Pond etc.) for recreational purposes.
- Parking associated with lakeshore/waterbody access throughout district needs to be substantially increased.
- Paucity of parking at Phyllis Ashton Circuit & Strayleaf Crescent Gungahlin for patrons of commercial facilities. (Solution under consideration – funding required).
- Provide tennis courts in district.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

- NBN Roll-out (regular updates on progress, communications plan & community involvement). Initial cabling will connect homes in Palmerston, Ngunnawal & Amaroo by May 2013. Roll-out will continue to connect another 14,000 thereafter (late 2013 onwards).

Residents of those suburbs not included in the initial roll-out program (despite having subpar services for many years) will get services connected as the flow-on from the first cells continues.

- Digital Hub located in Gungahlin Library to assist residents maximise the potential of the services made available through the NBN.
- Majura Parkway Update: The project was announced earlier in 2011. Construction is now underway (February 2013). This new road will make it easier for Canberrans to get around the city & provide an essential bypass for southbound & eastbound travellers thus taking a substantial number of trucks off residential streets. Once open to traffic in 2016, the Majura Parkway will be an important north-south transport link, providing a direct connection between the Federal & Monaro Highways.

The Gungahlin Leisure Centre Development, located in the block between Gungahlin College & The Valley Ave, includes 50m main & 25m secondary pools linked with a range of other smaller water bodies usable for exercise programs, learn to swim & water play, a Gymnasium, fitness rooms, changerooms, a café & child care facilities. It will be ACT Government owned with management put to tender. Construction work has commenced & is expected to take 18 months with the opening planned for mid-2014.

An enclosed Oval project on an adjacent block (westward) is currently under construction, with turf, goal posts and nets in place. Construction of parking facilities has commenced with the grandstand and amenities block yet to be started.

Park'n'Ride. Greater focus should be placed on expanding a dedicated user friendly, functional Park'n'Ride facility at or near EPIC, supported by an upgraded public transport service, to encourage Gungahlin residents plus commuters using the Federal & Barton Highways to terminate their private vehicle journeys at or near EPIC thus reducing Northbourne Avenue congestion & avoiding expensive parking fees in Civic. Plans are currently underway to construct more Park'n'Ride facilities within the Gungahlin town centre with the 1st area behind the rear of Big W.

There will be another small Park'n'Ride facility at Wells Station Drive intersection.

The EPIC Park'n'Ride facility opened on November 2011 but provisions have not been made to compensate for overflow parking for major EPIC events that continue to utilise the site. The Gungahlin Health Centre, completed in September 2012, needs to be upgraded to "enhanced" status and boosted by a Nurse Walk-in Clinic.

- Urgent need to create a substantial Employment Hub in Gungahlin – preferably by locating more than one Government Department in or close to the Town Centre.

This will provide opportunities for Gungahlin residents for local employment reduce outwards traffic flows & increase inwards traffic flows which in turn benefit workers & residents travelling out of Gungahlin as it balances out waiting times at roundabouts & traffic lights where the situation currently favours inwards traffic on the Barton & Federal Highways.

Local businesses will also benefit from an increased clientele & more small businesses are likely to be drawn to the area.

Update: In December 2012 Minister Barr announced the successful developer & site (to the rear of the Marketplace block) for the construction of a building to accommodate 500

staff from an ACT Government Department (Shared Services area of the Chief Minister's Department). Lobbying activities will continue to encourage the relocation of Commonwealth Government staff to Gungahlin.

The GCC wants to see advantage being taken of the NBN roll-out in Gungahlin & the Commonwealth Government-funded NBN awareness programs (based at the Gungahlin Library) to encourage the establishment of a number of support services & businesses.

A specific technology centre would certainly pro-vide a base for new services for the region & the rest of Canberra. The NBN service was officially 'turned on' in Gungahlin in late December 2012. The Town Centre was connected in early February 2013 with suburbs of Palmerston, Ngunnawal & Amaroo expected to be connected by May 2013.

(Ewan Brown President GCC).

The following article was prepared after attending the community meeting convened by the Belconnen Community Council.

Acknowledgements are made to the Canberra Times for articles published before & after the meeting.) GCC believes that community consultation on this matter needs to extend much wider than the local community!

Residents meet to discuss proposed tower development in Belconnen.

Developers proposing designs for Canberra's tallest residential building have faced community concerns over height and shadowing.

Over 100 people attended the Belconnen Community Council meeting to discuss the proposed 35 storey & 112-metre-tall project to build towers of residential, and hotel apartments & commercial premises in the Belconnen Town Centre, opposite the Lake Ginninderra College on the corner of Eastern Valley Way and Aikman Drive.

It was noted that plans for the controversial Woden 9 development were withdrawn by the Land Development Agency. This project - consisting of residential, retail and office space across three towers of 28 storeys, 21 storeys and 16 storeys - had been opposed by the Woden Valley Community Council due to the height and scale of the proposed buildings.

Woden Community Council President Dr Jenny Stewart said WCC was unlikely to support any major developments in the town centre pre-cinct before an overarching master plan for the area had been developed. Their view was that highrise has its place in town centres only if it is "well done".

"There is no overall plan for the Woden Town Centre at all and it's a series of rather adhoc proposals which are approved as they usually are without much consideration being given to the cumulative effects of these decisions."

Master planning for Woden, Athllon Drive and Mawson has begun, according to the acting Director General of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, Ben Ponton.

"ESDD is preparing a master plan that looks at the longer-term planning of the area as a whole and how the various elements of transport and development fit together to create an active, attractive and sustainable centre," he said.

Land Development Agency chief executive David Dawes said higher-density developments should remain a priority for Canberra's town centres.

GCC notes that the Town Centre has a current height restriction of 4 storeys. Why? It would certainly assist in attracting more commercial & residential variety in Gungahlin if higher buildings were permitted. It would even serve the interests of 'dollar-driven-development' because developments projects would become more viable.

The developers for the Belconnen project have done a good job in considering the interests of the occupiers & the visual amenity should appeal to many. However the sheer size of such a project in suburban Canberra may take some time to get used to & the community consultation process has to extend way beyond the local community. Remember the outcry about Black Mountain Tower!

High rise may be advantageous for Gungahlin as it should mitigate against the continuing urban sprawl & need for more infrastructure to channel residents out of the district for employment, entertainment, shopping & access to a range of services not yet available in Gungahlin. GCC also would like to see a contemporary master plan for the Town Centre.

Funding the Gungahlin/Civic Light Rail by Dr Kevin Cox

The Gungahlin/Civic Light Rail can be a profitable valuable asset for Canberra Citizens. It can pay for itself and it can contribute to the Government Revenue rather being a drain on the Government Finances.

To achieve this outcome two orthodoxies of government finance have to be broken. The first is hypothecation of taxes and the second is funding through compound interest loans.

The Gungahlin Terminus

\$120 Million in Capital towards the building of the Route can be obtained from a privately built and operated Terminus Office/Shopping Complex built in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

It is proposed that a building of at least eight stories be built on the block of land that has been a Gungahlin Town Centre eyesore for ten years. This block of land is bounded by Hibberson St, Ernest Cavanagh St, and Gribble St.

The Terminus will provide a rental income of at least \$20M to the owners of the building.

It is proposed that a Light Rail Surcharge of 20% be taken from the rental income of the Terminus. This represents the extra rent that is obtained from a property situated on a Light Rail Stop. This extra value will be used to help fund the Light Rail Facility.

Using non-compounding funding an inflation indexed income stream of \$4M for 30 years will fund \$120M in Capital Works. In comparison compound interest loans at 5% will fund \$64M worth of capital works.

The Value of Light Rail

The above shows that one building can finance \$120M of Capital Works if we realise the value of light rail to the property and if we use non-compounding methods of finance.

With 10 stops on the route it means the value added to property will Fund the Light Rail link. There will be enough Capital to spend to en-sure the operating costs are low. This means more carriages, more services, faster services, better transit facilities, better feed in systems, which in turn means more patronage which in turn means the operating costs per trip will be lower and the profit from operating the system higher. This method of funding is how the Hong Kong MTR turns a profit. The construction of the MTR was funded from the income stream of property built on the stations.

Light Rail makes property on the Rail Stops more valuable. This value can be captured & used to build the Light Rail between Gungahlin & Civic & turn it into a profit making operation.

The income stream from the link can then be used to assist the development of a Light Rail system throughout other parts of Canberra because more links means more traffic on the Gungahlin/Civic route. There will be no cost to taxpayers & the project will continue to increase the wealth of the citizens of Canberra.

DISCOVER THE INTERNET STEP-BY-STEP

It's time to sign up and get ready to experience the ACT Digital Hub at Gungahlin library with group training open to the public now! <http://www.actdigitalhub.eventbrite.com.au/>
A Digital Hub is a place you can visit free of charge that demonstrates the National Broadband Network, how to get connected, and what it can be used for in your home.

One-on-one sessions are made to fit your individual needs and are available during these times (maximum half hour sessions only) during February & March:

Monday: 3.30 pm - 5 pm

Tuesday: 11.30 am - 2 pm 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm

Wednesday: 6 pm - 8 pm

Thursday: 11.30 am - 2 pm 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm

Friday: 3.30 pm - 5 pm

Saturday: 3 pm - 4.30 pm

Bookings are highly recommended, make at www.ACTDigitalHub.eventbrite.com.au

For more information

email digitalhub@act.gov.au or call 6205 9000

The BIG Series: Stories on Broadband In Gungahlin #2- It's Arrived! By Peter Elford

The formal launch of the NBN in Gungahlin was held at the Gungahlin Library on Friday 1st February, attended by not only the appropriate VIP's (Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband and Mike Quigley, CEO of NBNco) but also the people that have campaigned long to improve broadband services in Gungahlin. These included ACT Senator Kate Lundy, GCC's own Ewan Brown and founder of the www.actbroadband.net web-site Russell Gillon. On behalf of all

Community News

Gungahlin residents I would like to thank you all for your persistence and perseverance!



Harrison School student Paige Murray presses the button to celebrate the switch-on of the NBN fibre network in Gungahlin.



Senator Stephen Conroy, Ewan Brown, Senator Kate Lundy, Peter Elford, and Russ Gillon get their turn at the Big Red Button!

The launch included a demonstration of the difference the NBN can make; a video connection of startling clarity and resolution was established between a group of students from the Harrison School at the library and students at Chitose Senior High School in Hokkaido, Japan. The students shared a short lesson in Japanese and English and entertained one another with performances of 'Waltzing Matilda' and the Japanese folk song 'Okina Kuri Kino Shitade' ("Under the Chestnut Tree"). This was facilitated by Dr. Myungsook

Auh from the University of New England as part of her Asia ConneXions project and Harrison School teacher Daniel Manestar.



Harrison School students sharing a lesson with students from Japan via a video link over the NBN connection in the Digital Hub at Gungahlin Library, assisted by Senators Stephen Conroy & Kate Lundy, Member for Fraser Andrew Leigh, & NBNco CEO Mike Quigley.

Senator Conroy was also on hand to launch the ACT's Digital Hub which showcases the NBN & provides free, easy courses on the following to all members of the community:

What is the NBN?

- Internet basics
- Computer basics
- Email
- Social media
- Cybersafety
- Online shopping and banking
- Access to government services.

The hub is located at the Gungahlin Library – visit <http://www.library.act.gov.au/ACTDigitalHub> for more information.

Local Roll-out Update

Of course, the most exciting news is that most residents in the suburbs of Gungahlin (around the town centre) and Harrison can now order NBN services from their ISP's! Demand has been very strong, as evidenced by how busy the installers have been and the consequent delays in getting connections. There has also been some frustration regarding where

Community News

NBN connections appear inside people's homes as reported in the Canberra Times and on some Internet discussion groups. The issue is that the equipment that needs to be installed in-side the home to provide the NBN needs to be powered from a standard power point, & the temptation for the installer is to locate this equipment near the power point closest to where the NBN fibre enters the home from the street. This might make it difficult to connect up your phone & home network to an NBN service. NBNco have reacted quickly to the problem & the installers are now working with residents to ensure the NBN equipment is located appropriately as part of the (free) standard installation process.

There has also been some disquiet regarding the announcement that the existing copper network will be switched within 18 months of NBN services becoming available in your area.

For those that are quickly jumping on the NBN, for Internet or phone services or both, this is not an issue. But for others, particularly those that may only have a phone line, this can be a major concern as they may not see any need to move to the NBN, or they may use services that currently rely on the copper phone network such as alarms or medical monitors.

For phone services, residents should contact their existing phone company & ask to have the phone moved over to the NBN – the NBN supports normal phone services (as well as high speed broadband) so customers should experience no change in their service. If you have alarms or medical monitors or other services that rely on the old copper network, contact the provider of these services as soon as possible to find out how their service will be supported over the NBN.

The rollout continues with the lime-green fibre going into the ground throughout Amaroo, Franklin, Ngunnawal, & Palmerston with forecast "ready for service" dates spread across April, May, & June.

For these lucky residents, & those already connected to the NBN, check out the Digital Hub on the link above if you have any questions or want to know how the NBN might make a difference to you!



Site for the new ACT Government office block. Watch this space...