

# Senator Catryna Bilyk

## Kingborough Chronicle "Comment Column"

### Getting Kingston Beach connected

On a cold Saturday morning three weeks ago there was a palpable buzz at the clubrooms of the Kingston Beach Sailing Club. Around 420 local residents walked in and out of the room during the day to look at the displays or to talk to the helpful staff.

At times it was standing room only, and the sausage sizzle provided by the Sailing Club volunteers outside the door was greatly appreciated.

NBN Co was deservedly pleased with the success of their first community information session at Kingston Beach. The suburb is one of seven sites in the second stage rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN).

The company will be holding a follow-up session after the rollout and this will give potential customers the chance to talk to the retail service providers and find out more about the plans they have to offer.

As a long-time local resident of the Kingborough municipality, I decided on my election to the Senate to establish an office in Kingston. Residents of Kingborough and the Huon Valley appreciate having access to Australia's southern-most Federal Parliamentary office, and many people who visit my office raise issues that are relevant to the local area.

One of the common complaints I have heard is the lack of fast and affordable broadband services, not just in rural areas like Longley and Woodbridge, but even in urban areas such as Kingston and Blackmans Bay.

Whatever the situation is in the rest of Australia, it is apparent in Kingborough that the market has failed to deliver what families and businesses are demanding for their broadband services.

The NBN will deliver optic fibre broadband services to 93 percent of Australian homes and businesses, giving them access to speeds of 100 megabits per second (Mbps). The remaining 7 percent of Australian premises will receive wireless and satellite broadband services with speeds of at least 12Mbps. For comparison, the average broadband connection today is about 1.5Mbps.

This is the largest infrastructure project in Australia's history and eventually it will lead to a transformation of our economy, the way we do business, our entertainment and communications, and how many of our education and health care services are delivered. It will add 0.6 percent per year to Australia's GDP growth.

One example of how the Australian Government is changing the way we do business is our commitment of \$400 million to provide Medicare rebates for online consultations. This service will be significantly boosted by the NBN and will particularly benefit patients in remote areas or with mobility problems.

Although the Federal Opposition Leader ordered his Communications spokesman, Malcolm Turnbull, to 'demolish' the NBN, local customers have been champing at the bit to sign up to the network.

At the stage one release sites of Midway Point, Scottsdale and Smithton, 15 percent of premises have an active NBN connection. This exceeds the forecast of an initial take-up rate of 10 percent, and the number continues to grow.

And despite continued Opposition claims that the network will be a white elephant, the NBN Corporate Plan has demonstrated there will be a 7 percent return on the Government's investment.

An Abbott-led Coalition Government would tear up the NBN, but if the response at Kingston Beach is anything to go by they are completely out of step with community sentiment.

**To see the Kingston Beach optic fibre footprint visit [www.nbntasmania.com.au](http://www.nbntasmania.com.au).  
For more information about the National Broadband Network contact NBN  
Tasmania on 1800 881 816.**