



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

# **Getting the best from the NBN**

22 June 2011

The Australian Local Government Association and NBN Co today launched a guide to help councils prepare for the rollout of the NBN and maximise the benefits of their early dealings with NBN Co.

The *Best Practice Guide for Councils when initially dealing with NBN Co* was released today at the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly being held in Canberra.

The Guide is based on research involving councils from within NBN Co's First Release Sites. The research found that councils were generally very positive about their engagement with NBN Co, and after some early learnings, there was no need to change the model for future rollouts. Councils interviewed found no major costs incurred in managing the project, as much of the support was in-kind, however the project teams had a high workload, and some councils would consider a full-time project lead for future rollouts.

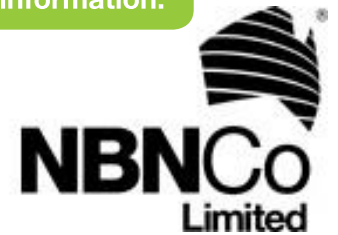
Taking these experiences, the Guide aims to assist councils understand the resource implications, information and communications needs of the NBN rollout to ensure the early planning and consultation phases progress as smoothly as possible.

NBNCo Head of Corporate Services, Kevin Brown said: "NBN Co relies heavily on the support and assistance of councils to help us gather information for our network planning and as a conduit to the local community for consultation and the dissemination of information.

"We were pleased to work with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) on this review of our performance in engaging with councils and communities in the First Release Sites in order to improve and share the experiences. The right engagement can help save weeks in our preparations if there is ready information about local infrastructure, heritage and environment zones, planned site developments and a good guide to the demographic characteristics of the area. All these feed into our understanding of the area and the detailed design process," Mr Brown said.

ALGA President, Genia McCaffery said that while there was a great deal of support and enthusiasm within local government for the NBN, some councils were concerned that they were not prepared, or that they were spending resources in areas that may not be useful to NBN Co.

"We have based this Guide on the practical experience of some of those councils which have already worked with NBN Co in the First Release Sites," Cr McCaffery said.



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“This is an opportunity for councils to show they are taking a leadership role in supporting the rollout of leading-edge technology in their areas and encouraging the cultural, economic and social benefits that will bring.”

“I am pleased that ALGA and NBN Co have been able to work together to target the priority areas of cooperation that will make a meaningful difference to our early engagement on the NBN rollout”.

### **Editors note:**

Copies of the Guide can be found at [www.alga.asn.au/publications](http://www.alga.asn.au/publications)

### **KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS:**

- Councils were generally very positive about the engagement with NBN Co, the overall project implementation and the fact that they were chosen as first release sites.
- Two issues were raised during the initial engagement period: lack of time to prepare and changing interfaces to NBN Co. However, councils understood that these issues arose due to the fact that they were the first release sites and as such they recognised that NBN Co was also going through a learning process. They believe that these issues are mainly resolved hence future councils would see a more organised approach from NBN Co.
- All councils highlighted the steep learning curve at the start of the project where council staff had to understand the project scope, the impacts on their communities and then manage the exchange of data with NBN Co. The clear recommendation for future councils was to be prepared for the project before it arrives.
- In terms of resource requirements, no councils added any staff. However, the workload for the council project team was high and as such they had to reprioritise other council initiatives. Consequently, some councils believe that they would need to assign a full time project lead for future network rollouts.
- Councils also agreed that the overall engagement model with NBN Co worked and that they would not need to change their model for future rollouts.

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