

Fwd: AGM | CEO Report

From: Laurie Patton <ceo@internet.org.au>
Date: Wed, 12 Oct 2016 12:39:41 +1100
To: George Fong <chair@internet.org.au>

From: "Laurie Patton" <ceo@internet.org.au>
Date: 10 October 2016 at 2:42:40 pm AEDT
To: <members@lists.internet.org.au>
Subject: AGM | CEO Report

Dear members

The past year has seen Internet Australia continue to travel well on the road to greater relevance and effectiveness as the NFP peak body representing everyone who uses the Internet. As you know, two years ago your board recognised the need for change and my appointment was part of their initiative to this end.

We are now seeing our policies being more actively debated in both the technical press and mainstream media. A number of government departments and agencies are now calling on us for expert advice and assistance. This includes the ACCC, the Digital Transformation Office and the Productivity Commission.

We continue to be at the vanguard of efforts to convince the Federal Government to abandon its copper-based multi-technology mix (MTM) model for the National Broadband Network in favour of a return to fibre. Our Twitter hash-tags for this are #FibreToTheFuture and #BetterBroadband

While we have not yet succeeded in this important task there are increasing signs that industry and the community has begun to question the current strategy. Australia continues to fall in global average speed rankings and we hover around number 10 in our region. Last week's Essential poll found that 88 percent of respondents see the Internet becoming an essential service, like water and electricity. However, when asked to comment on the Government's copper model verses the Opposition's fibre model around a third said they "didn't know". To me this says that our job is not finished. In an earlier incarnation, as a television executive, we had a saying that whenever the directors complained that a certain promo had been running for too long that was a sign it was probably starting to work. The theory is that when those closest to you start to complain about a recurring message it is just beginning to get through to a broader audience.

The ACCC's proposal for a speed and performance review, which we have supported, is gaining traction and the media is starting to highlight stories that demonstrate a systemic implementation issue.

We have recommended to the Productivity that the telco Universal Service Obligation be expanded to include data and that the government should provide the necessary funding.

Our ISP SIG has worked in conjunction with the Communications Alliance and finally secured the release of the \$128 million package of support for the implementation of the Data Retention Scheme. That said, we continue to point out that the legislation is

“fundamentally flawed” and note that the government’s funding package does not fully compensate ISP’s for their capex outlays and provides no ongoing operational funding. In that basis we have pointed to the likelihood that consumers will end up footing the bill via increased Internet access charges.

We continue to campaign against the use of “site-blocking” as a means of dealing with the unlawful downloading of content over the Internet. Our view is that the best solution to this issue is for the overseas rights holders to stop using “geoblocking” to price-gouge and to make their content more readily accessible. We have noted that with the launch of Netflix and the local streaming services there have already been reports of a decline in unlawful downloading. Our position is supported by the Prime Minister who when Communications Minister said “Rights holders’ most powerful tool to combat online copyright infringement is making content accessible, timely, and affordable to consumers”. Our Twitter hashtag #WeAreNotTheProblem highlights the fact that based on international reporting Australia is not the source of a significant amount of global Internet “piracy”. We note that the local rights holders have failed to provide concrete evidence of real or substantial financial losses.

We have continued to build bridges with our elected representatives through our sponsorship of Parliamentary Friends of the Internet. This initiative has naturally been affected by the lengthy election campaign period but plans are afoot to hold more PFI events.

2016 is the National Year of Digital Inclusion and we have been proud to support this initiative, developed by InfoExchange and funded by Australia Post. I am proud to be one of a number of @GoDigiAustralia “champions” for NYDI.

We have joined with the Communications Alliance, UTS Sydney and a range of industry groups to help establish the Internet of Things Alliance of Australia (IOTAA). Our involvement in this group is founded on the belief that IoT, delivered through the connectivity that the Internet provides, has the potential to significantly increase our economic performance and also assist with our social development. We are also involved in order to help ensure that issues relating to privacy and security are placed firmly on the table.

Last week I had the honour of representing IA at an ISOC Chapter Leaders meeting in Bangkok followed by a UN sponsored conference on regional Internet issues. It was notable that for many other countries the concerns we have are shared and it was reassuring to learn that our progress is being monitored and seen as an example of how effective communications strategies based on solid policy work can increase the effectiveness of ISOC chapters.

Our Policy Committee has contributed submissions to a number of public inquiries and has provided input to the board in developing IA’s stance on critical Internet related issues. The committee’s chair, Holly Raiche, has embarked on a mission to increase its membership and to broaden the skills base upon which we can call for advice and assistance in preparing submissions. Part of that process involves identifying the key issue that our members believe we should focus on and the policy positions that we should advocate.

IA now stands at a cross road and we are looking to our members to indicate how we should proceed and to help us acquire the resources to further increase our effectiveness. This Thursday the board will be meeting to discuss our plans for the upcoming year. Please let me or any of the directors know your thoughts.

Finally, I am indebted to our board executive, and in particular George Fong, for their support and assistance. The same goes for the other directors who have lent their active support to our work.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM this Wednesday or to your contribution via your preferred online method.

Kind regards

LAURIE PATTON

Chief Executive Officer | Internet Australia

"Helping Shape Our Internet Future"

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