

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Martin

to Minister for Communications, Science and Technology

Outback Electronic Network

What is the government's intentions for the \$3m of federal funding over a 12 month period to develop the electronic outback network.

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Government was allocated \$3.2 million funding through the Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). The project has been delayed because of a decision by the RTIF Board to duplicate telecommunications infrastructure and services in remote communities in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Government intends to begin negotiations with the Commonwealth to ensure that the original project outcomes as agreed to in 1998 are achieved within a project structure which will be of high quality, sustainable and acceptable to all Territorians.

The original project envisaged the provision to remote communities of comprehensive broadband communications services, which would be available to all community members including community organisations, Local Government, Northern Territory Government and Commonwealth Government agencies. It is planned that the project will include a structure to provide ongoing representation from communities involved in the project.

It is hoped that negotiations with the Commonwealth will be finalised quickly and the matter resolved so the roll-out of communications to communities can begin.