

# CORRECTED VERSION

## RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

### **Inquiry into the opportunities for people to use telecommuting and e-business to work remotely in rural and regional Victoria**

Ballarat — 17 July 2013

#### Members

Mr D. Drum  
Mr G. Howard  
Mr A. Katos

Mr I. Trezise  
Mr P. Weller

Chair: Mr P. Weller  
Deputy Chair: Mr G. Howard

#### Staff

Executive Officer: Ms L. Topic  
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#### Witness

Ms J. Cromarty, director, Socom.

**The CHAIR** — Welcome, Jennifer, to the Parliament of Victoria’s Rural and Regional Committee and its inquiry into the opportunity for people to use telecommuting and e-business to work remotely in rural and regional Victoria. I hereby advise that all evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided under relevant Australian law. I also advise that any comments made outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. Jennifer, would you give your full name and address for the benefit of Hansard, please?

**Ms CROMARTY** — It is Jennifer Cromarty, and Socom is based at 140 Bourke Street, Melbourne, but I live in Geelong. That might become relevant a bit later.

**The CHAIR** — Right, and as to your presentation, would you like questions as we go or at the end?

**Ms CROMARTY** — I am happy to answer questions as we go, and just to clarify, I will give a bit of an introduction about the sort of work I have done more generally over the last few years, but I am here in one capacity, as Rural Councils Victoria — presenting a submission that we made and giving you an update on that — and then also I will talk more generally about Socom because, just hearing what has been discussed today, we have gone to the cloud for a lot of its telework, so there might be some information I can share about our experience there as well.

**The CHAIR** — You are going to pull us down out of the clouds, are you?

**Ms CROMARTY** — I can tell you about the journey we have been through and are going through with cloud-based solutions. I am happy to just run through what I felt were some of the key points, but feel free to ask as we go. I am fairly chatty, though.

My background is in public relations but more recently advocacy and policy, so my most recent job before Socom, which is a consultancy, was at the Australian Retailers Association. I thought that might be relevant because I was heavily involved with the issues around online and engagement with retail, so any questions about retail I am more than happy to discuss as well.

When I came to Socom I got quite involved with some of the challenges facing particularly local government in terms of digital engagement and the NBN rollout. My role there includes running secretariats of local government. I will give you a couple that I have worked on: firstly, Regional Cities Victoria. I did an ICT briefing paper for them a couple of years ago which led me on a couple of journeys. Another one was the Gippsland Local Government Network, and I did want to talk about something I have done for Gippsland as well. There has also been the Central Highlands Mayors and CEOs Forum, which is this region, and all the way up. We have had Hepburn here and we have had Ballarat here.

So in terms of regional development across the board, I am quite involved with local government and I will be talking specifically about how Rural Councils Victoria has commissioned me for a couple of projects. I do not know whether you know Rural Councils Victoria, but I am assuming you do. There are 38 councils outside of the regional cities and they have some funding to look at activities related to economic development. The project I have been working on for the past six months is the Intelligent Communities Supporting Creative Industries program. So in terms of the inquiry today, what I did was put in some early findings we had related to teleworking and creative industries specifically.

This piece of work I personally believe is quite groundbreaking for Victoria because creative industries is not really acknowledged as a sector as such, so we have done a lot of work in defining what that sector looks like, including what it looks like by local government areas in rural councils. The report that will be tabled when we finalise, which will probably be in the next three or four weeks, will have quite a lot of data around it. The submission included some of those early findings. But the work I have done, apart from that research which was done by Essential Economics, is an opportunities paper. So I will give you an overview of the paper that will hopefully be finalised and approved in the next three or four weeks, and then very briefly go through the extra work we have done since we made the submission as well, on the teleworking element.

The opportunities paper has four sections. One is on creative champions. We have talked a lot today about how the roles of mentors or people who have worked in creative industries, for example, can help support rural communities in developing that sector. There is a paper there showing examples from across Australia and around the world and in rural areas in Victoria in terms of what it means to actually have creative champions in rural areas and what they can do to help build capability and help people achieve more work time back in local areas as well.

The other papers are on capability building, which has been probably one of the biggest things I have been working on in the last couple of years — how we help people, in whatever sector they are in but particularly creative industries, understand the opportunities in digital economies. So there is a paper around that. There is a paper around hubs, and I notice there is a lot of discussion around hubs and coworking spaces. I am happy to take questions on any of those papers as we go. For example, each paper has, ‘What is the opportunity?’, ‘What is the evidence supporting it?’ and ‘What do we recommend?’. Hopefully in the next month you will have access to this paper, which hopefully will then inform some of the questions raised today.

**The CHAIR** — You might send us a copy.

**Ms CROMARTY** — Absolutely, and I have already discussed that. We will table that, because I notice that your deadline is now 30 August, so there is a bit more time to table those back to you.

The fourth paper is teleworking. If it is okay, I might just go through a little bit. I do not want to bore you with data, because I will leave a paper copy anyway when we finish, but the teleworking paper is basically looking at what the opportunity is. What does it look like? It talks about all the data sets we have gathered in terms of what the economic benefits are and what existing policies there are — so, I am putting that policy hat on and looking at the federal government’s papers and initiatives that they have run, like National Telework Week. The first one was last year.

We have looked at things like the high proportion of unmet internet demand, and I know we are not talking about connectivity, but I am doing a lot of work in that space as well with my secretariats, looking at mobile black spots and broadband access across rural and regional Victoria. The unmet demand stuff really paints a picture about what businesses in what areas in rural Victoria — not if they do not have it but do they need it and at what level? The data will actually show the highest levels of unmet demand. Just as an example, Golden Plains shire has 51 per cent unmet demand, the highest in rural councils in the state. We look at how digital connectivity is crucial to support teleworking, though it seems fairly self-evident. We have actually put in there things like reports by Deloitte looking at economic modelling of how many jobs could be created based on connectivity, so hopefully that will all help this inquiry. I will leave you a copy when we table it.

That is the opportunity. We then look at the evidence, and one of the key things that came out of our research was this concept of jobs deficit. That just means that if I live in Torquay or if I live in Kyneton or if I live in Daylesford, am I actually employed outside of my rural shire area? There is a huge what we call ‘jobs deficit’, which means people are commuting, essentially, to their jobs in creative industries. What we see as one of the key things in rural areas is that opportunity to say, ‘I might be a graphic designer and working in a rural area, and I need to work in Ballarat’, because we are actually talking about rural councils, not regional cities. How can we support those people, whether they have their own business, are self-employed, have other employees or are actually employed by someone else? How can we encourage them to work even a day a week or a day a month in their rural area? Because there are obviously flow-on benefits to that community, which you have heard today about. They might have lunch in the local cafe. They might support the local retail offering. There are a few other flow-on effects there.

The data that is in the original submission is Journey to Work data that has come from the ABS. We see that in rural communities there is this opportunity to support those people in trying to come up with strategies to help them work locally. We have some data around the changing workplace behaviours, which has been discussed again today. It is all this stuff about, ‘What is the workplace of the future?’ Without going on too much about Socom, what we are finding is that people will work wherever they are.

Today is a classic example. I have been here. I wrote and posted a blog about today a couple of hours ago. You are able to do stuff. You are able to keep connecting with all the people — there are probably two or three in the office in Melbourne and a couple working in other areas at the moment. It really just means, then, ‘What does that office environment look like?’

Socom recently moved from an office they have had for 20 years in Lonsdale Street that was really quite large. We had a lot of tenants, but we moved because of the changing nature of the workforce and the fact that I am travelling a lot and a lot of us are travelling a lot and working a day a week at home or in another hub. I do have a hub in Geelong at the moment where I work. What does that office look like? It is even about how you design the office. You have project teams that work in and out. You do not necessarily have a desk that you sit at every single day. We have our meeting rooms. We might have breakout spaces. We went through this whole exercise about six months ago, and what we actually found was that, for instance, we rent some spaces to some businesses at the moment that come and share our offices, but I actually work with a lot of contractors because we do quite specialist work. They actually want to come in and work with us, so on any given day I have to make sure I have enough space.

I have a writer who does work within state government and I have a contractor who is coming in and doing some specialist policy work; they want the environment, but they are not there all the time. They might say, ‘Hey, look, I’ve got to ask you a couple of questions. Can I come in?’. We will just let them work there for the day.

**The CHAIR** — What does the hub in Geelong look like?

**Ms CROMARTY** — I actually wrote a paper called *Digital Hothouse for Geelong* two years ago, and it did not get up at the time because it was just me, Jenny Cromarty, writing a paper. I spoke to the City of Greater Geelong, and at the time they did not really have the wherewithal to make it happen. It is still bubbling.

**The CHAIR** — So what does the hub look like?

**Ms CROMARTY** — The one I work at is just one that is an architecture firm called Third Ecology, and they are in Pakington Street, and Tract, who are urban planners and landscape architects. They have a Geelong office in the Third Ecology building. I have a desk that I can use two days a week. There is actually another business I have not even met yet which has hired another room, and we just call it the Hive because the building is called the Hive.

**Mr HOWARD** — Who owns the building? It is privately owned?

**Ms CROMARTY** — It is leased — I am positive it is leased — in terms of Third Ecology, which has had a long-term lease.

**Mr TREZISE** — What is the address, Jenny?

**Ms CROMARTY** — That is a good question. It is right next to the Dial-a-Lunch in Pakington Street. I will have to look. It is on our website, but I actually do not know the address because I just rock up there when I am there.

**Mr HOWARD** — Just near Ian’s office, is it?

**Ms CROMARTY** — No, it is more towards Bed Bath N’ Table. You know the pub? Is it St George pub? Near the post office. It is right there.

**The CHAIR** — Could we understand what the hub actually looks like? It is called the Hive —

**Ms CROMARTY** — Well, we call it the Hive.

**The CHAIR** — and currently there are two there. What is the capacity of the hub? Are there hot desks there? What is the structure of it.

**Ms CROMARTY** — Yes. I will paint the picture, and one of the papers I am writing paints that picture more fully, so I am hoping to get that to you as soon as I can, but there are a whole range of things. I had a couple of options. I could have gone and shared with a law firm. I could have started my own space. I have a client who is a property developer who is going to look at having a shared working space. I will probably look at that in the future, but what attracted me was that I have like-minded people. They work in a space I am familiar with. In terms of the look and feel, if that is what you mean, there is some element of open plan.

**The CHAIR** — What would we need in hubs if they were to be rolled out around rural and regional Victoria? What are the aspects that people who use them would be looking for?

**Ms CROMARTY** — There is a lot of aesthetic that needs to be taken into account. In Geelong, for instance — and I am not having any issue with some of the stuff that has been going on there — Keith Fagg, the mayor of Geelong, was looking at a Northern Futures, like a North Geelong concept. That would not be attractive to a creative-industries type because it is too far away from amenity, cafes and other businesses that we might want to collaborate with. There is going to be a checklist in the paper I am writing. You look at amenity: a lot of them love the heritage buildings. A lot of them love the idea of light, airy spaces. You need to obviously have some sort of broadband connectivity. I do not necessarily think it needs to be that high speed; it depends what you want to do on a given day. Graphic designers probably need a lot more than I would; most of my stuff is Word based.

I kind of want to dispel the myth that we need to wait for the NBN; this is already happening, and I would love to talk to you about the Gippsland broadband engagement plan I wrote because it was written purely on the basis of ‘Don’t wait. Get your communities engaged now. Get your businesses using what they have. If they do not have it, go to the community neighbourhood houses or go to the libraries. Start developing your own sense of collaborative workspace where the connectivity is’. In terms of other aspects — —

**The CHAIR** — In the community houses, they have to have an area where you can do it.

**Ms CROMARTY** — Yes. In Gippsland there are some areas that have zero connectivity, and we were looking for residential and community stuff as well as the business stuff. There are different needs, but it was really about getting people engaged with what they can do with that, even if it is about internet banking for older people. My father is 72 and trades stock on the internet. He did not know how to turn on a computer three years ago. It was a real struggle, and now you cannot get him off it. So I think it is about the digital divide — that concept.

In terms of the hub, I am looking more at businesses — microbusinesses — and the sorts of things they need. As I said, there is the aesthetic but there is also this collaborative opportunity, so I could work at home. I could work at home and get quite a lot of work done, not a problem, but as for the amount of opportunity you have, you do not know when you walk in the door who is going to come in, because other people have other meetings. I generate a lot of work just purely on other people coming in to meet me who have then met someone who is there, and then we pitch projects together. Tract is an absolutely prime example of that, and that is only because I struck up a good friendship with the regional director in Geelong, and we are pitching for some quite substantial work.

I know that Deloitte, which has every resource in the world, actually gets its staff to go and work at the Hub in Melbourne. There is a global movement called the Hub, and there is one in Melbourne, there is one in Sydney — which is already oversubscribed — and there is one opening up in Adelaide. It is that model. Again, my paper will have a lot of detail around how that works, but Deloitte does it purely so that its consultants go out and hear what all those smart, savvy single operators are doing, what is current, what is new and what people are thinking. As a consultant you cannot manufacture that. You need to go into the spaces where those ideas are happening. I would say the Hub opportunity has so many more benefits than just working at home, purely on that social as well as collaborative effort.

I will not go into all the detail with the data, because I will leave it behind. Really it was just to go straight to some recommendations that we had not really approved yet, but I will tell you what we are thinking, and then I thought I might just pick up on some of the comments that were made during the day as well.

**The CHAIR** — You understand that this will be on a public website?

**Ms CROMARTY** — Not a problem. They know I am presenting what we have got, but in terms of the recommendations I do not think there will be any issue at all in tabling this now, because it is only now going through the final draft stages. The sort of thing we are looking at is on a rural council level. We really need to analyse their local commuting workforce and start identifying the opportunities to see who and what opportunities those people would have to work more locally. There is a little bit of a study that a local council could do. It could start having forums with local commuter participation and look at doing a national telework week event. Gippsland did one last year.

I will tell you a little bit about the broadband engagement plan. They wrote the plan, got some funding to implement it and ran some activities across the state. It was really to say, 'Here is an opportunity for me to have a dialogue with my employer'. They could look at having a broadband-enabled shared working space for a day, and councils could do this sort of work, I think, and start creating the environment, as we were talking about just earlier.

The OHS issue is a real issue. In our research there is a handbook that the New South Wales government produced in 2009, which is quite interesting, but I think there is probably room for a group like Rural Councils Victoria or Regional Development Victoria to develop a handbook to help those people make the transition. What are the simple things you need to do? Emma, who just spoke — I thought it was fascinating — has just a simple audit that she ticks off every year to say, 'Is my workplace safe? Have I done these things?'. I think we get burdened a lot with overregulation, and I think a lot of it is common sense, but at the same time I think there needs to be some sort of policy around small businesses helping them to understand how you look after those people who do want to work outside of the office, wherever it is. I should probably do a bit of an audit on the hub that I am at in Geelong.

They were just the basic recommendations for teleworking that we are looking at for rural councils. We want to keep them really simple and give them a start to have a conversation about, 'What is happening in my local environment, how many people are moving away, how many people can we keep' — even if it is, as I say, a day a month or a day a week — 'working from the local area and what can we do to help support them?'.

**Mr HOWARD** — So you have not done any work in that specific area yet? That is sort of the next step?

**Ms CROMARTY** — The next step? I have been funded to write a project plan as well. So the next step — and hopefully I will get this done in the next six weeks — is a detailed project plan. My understanding is that what we will do is call for expressions of interest from all the rural councils, and say, 'If you want to get involved with nurturing, growing and supporting creative industries in your community, you need to tick off on these things. You need to demonstrate X, Y and Z, and then we will potentially fund a couple of trials'. It will probably be a hub of some sort.

There are some examples in Coffs Harbour that I would really draw people's attention to now, but it is detailed in the papers. Coffs Harbour has a group called Six Degrees, and it is actually trialling pop-up hubs. Rather than saying, 'Here is a space', like an empty retail shop, which is an issue in some rural areas, we are just going to have an organic group of people who are interested in collaborating together and find a cafe that we can work from for a day, and it shows demand and it also starts pointing out, 'What requirements do we need?'. Regarding the things that came up, they did a pop-up workspace trial in Coffs Harbour in a cafe, and they said, firstly, it was a little bit noisy, and the coffee was bad. That was the feedback, which I thought was fascinating. There is a website set up dedicated to this trial. Basically once they have done, I believe, a couple of trials, they are then going to say, 'Now do we find a space that is

going to meet the needs?', but they have already created the demand. So there are a few really good things happening like that.

Probably the project plan that I will write is to recommend a pop-up trial and then from that look at whether we can sustain a full-time space that people can rent hourly, daily, monthly or whatever they want to do. But I would agree with an earlier speaker who said that it is about having smaller hubs. The Ballarat Technology Park is huge. This is not what we are talking about. We are talking about really organic, quite small areas where people who want to work together can. It is already happening, but I think the government can really support it by offering opportunities, if there is a requirement, to get some start-up funding or even some support in writing a plan.

Part of the paper will be about where you can get resources to get started. I am already asking the questions of Regional Development Victoria and DBI as to what that would look like, but it is not easy to just pick up funding off the shelf, because at the moment the government does not have a strategy around digital economies or this sort of collaborative workspace.

**Mr HOWARD** — But the other issue you raised, which I have been thinking about as we have talked today and so on, is looking at all of those people who are already on the train, for example, from Ballarat to Melbourne each day and getting a sense of why they are going — have they considered whether they need to go every day, whether they have approached their employer about it and what the issues are — so then we know: is it an employer issue or is it the employees who have not really thought about those options or have not pursued them, and then what is needed to support that?

**Mr TREZISE** — How many commute by car from Geelong?

**Mr HOWARD** — Or the road, yes.

**Ms CROMARTY** — Yes, I am on a train. The piece of work that might be really interesting is that when the research comes out it will actually show the jobs deficit by local government area. That local government can go, 'We've got 30 per cent or 60 per cent of our workforce', or whatever it is, 'out of the region. Why don't we try to identify, even if it is 10 per cent of those, who might be able to telework, based on the employers' feeling?'. I reckon it is the low-hanging fruit stuff. Do not worry about the ones that are hard; look at the ones that are quite easy to engage with.

That would not be a tough exercise for a rural council to engage with, but if we look at the datasets that we are going to have — I am just looking at them here — the total jobs provided in rural councils for the creative sector by location is 234 000-plus. When you are looking at the jobs deficit, you have got some thousands and thousands of people who are moving out of areas to commute every day, so I would tend to think that that is probably what I would call the low-hanging fruit, and I am not adverse at all about the wireless on trains stuff — I think that is absolutely fantastic — but what we are talking about is not even getting on the train or in the car at this point. Get them at home, even if it is for a short period of time and get them collaborating, because they may end up finding that they have a lot of work they can do when they start growing in the local areas as well.

**Mr DRUM** — Jennifer, what specifically do you think the government can do to assist the businesses as the employers? And we need to encourage them to do more. How could it encourage what you might call a latent workforce, which is not engaged? That could be young mums who probably have got 4 hours or 5 hours in the middle of the day during which they would like to do something. We probably have some semiretirees that could very easily step back in. How do we as a government maybe put some tools out in the workplace, put some encouragement out in the workplace or incentivise people to actually marry those two groups up — create the awareness for working from home, and get that cohort that is at home? And how do we encourage those people to realise their skills to make themselves more productive?

**Ms CROMARTY** — There is a lot in there. I will take the older people first if that is okay, because the rural communities have an older population who relocate for the lifestyle or the affordability or because they used to live there when they were growing up. I believe there is an absolutely untapped, really high level of creative-industry-type baby boomers, who we will look at engaging through this creative

champions program. So there is a paper that I am writing which will say, 'These are the things that you need to at least show if you want to do this role in your community'. I do believe that will probably flow on to getting greater productivity, whether it is on a volunteer basis, because rural communities also show much higher levels of volunteerism than others. So we are trying to marry those two together.

In terms of younger people, there is a fantastic program that has been funded on the mid-north coast in New South Wales, where they are skilling up young kids who are in the ICT/digital area at university to go into local businesses that maybe do not have a high level of understanding of digital engagement. It gets them to work in their businesses to develop that skill set, so no.1, it is actually keeping young people in the communities longer, and no.2, it is giving them some training to help facilitate other smaller businesses grow and also helping those businesses that might have older people in them or that have not quite understood what those opportunities are. I think that is a great program. It is like what I was trying to do with older people in rural communities to help encourage understanding of creative industries here. It is essentially saying, 'Let's get the young people to go into the businesses to help mentor them'.

In terms of mums, we have not targeted them in this project but my personal experience is that I started my own business when my second child was one. The PR industry is dominated by women; it is just the nature of the industry. I think it is about the skill sets. A lot of the time in some special sectors you know who is around, who has had a baby or who has not or who needs to be able to work more flexibly. All I can say is that you would probably put it back to those industry groups like the Public Relations Institute of Australia or some of those peak bodies to say, 'What programs can we run to help support you?'.

It is almost like a brain drain in our industry. You lose women in the 30 to 40-year-old bracket where they have had 10 years experience and then it is very hard — maybe it is not as easy, maybe they do not want to or whatever the challenges are — to get them back into the workforce on a part-time basis.

We have had one employee who has come back twice from maternity leave, and we have had to work out exactly how to make that happen. I have employed several women who have had babies while I have been with them or they came in from a full-time, really high-level corporate job, had the baby and did not realise what that meant for them in their lives. I said, 'I don't want to lose your experience. What can we do to tailor it?'. On a personal level I think it is to do with the nature of the skill set and also the industry being flexible enough to be able to allow it. Consulting, nursing, teaching — there are a few areas like that which probably fit the bill. But I have not looked at it in a rural Victoria context at all because it did not come up as a big opportunity.

**The CHAIR** — Jennifer, do you have any concluding remarks you would like to make?

**Ms CROMARTY** — Yes. I might just go a little bit more general, if that is okay. I have actually had this conversation with a few local government CEOs over the last two years: 'Why don't you start forging ahead and showing people about teleworking by opening up that opportunity for your staff?'. Both of them at the time said, 'There's no way. I get what you're talking about, but it's just not going to happen'. So I would say there is a real challenge out there for local government to embrace that. I understand there are jobs that are hard to do from home, but there are plenty that could be on a level. I said, 'Can't you do it just one day a year and just have a percentage?' 'No. I know what you're saying; it's just a bit scary'. I am just letting you know. That is me just talking to people, as I do.

With cloud computing, I am working on a pilot program with the Gippsland Local Government Network that South Gippsland is driving, which is getting their disaster recovery data to the cloud. We have written a paper, which is doing the rounds. RDV is aware of it; Local Government Victoria is aware of it. I just thought I would let you know that that is a huge opportunity for local government — not the servers in the building but the ones that just mirror in a disaster scenario. To me it is a no-brainer. We have the data; we have the numbers. The amount of money South Gippsland alone is saving is substantial. It is a great opportunity. If you want to talk to Tim Tamlin, he is just brilliant. We are working on this project together.

I wanted to point out that we rebranded Socom's new logo over Christmas as I was going to the cloud and moving office. We used Elance. I just wanted to table that there are global consulting online forums where

you can get jobs done. As an experiment we thought we would get our logo redesigned but we would put it out to a global tendering website. We ended up getting our logo designed in America or somewhere like that. When you look at rural communities, if they have any connectivity at all there are already forums where small operators can pitch for work around the world. It is a trend we wanted to be aware of. Since then I have used them repeatedly for jobs. We are using someone in Sri Lanka to help us with our cloud-based issues on a technical level.

**The CHAIR** — Maybe we will start to use someone in Sea Lake rather than Sri Lanka.

**Ms CROMARTY** — That is exactly right. Why are they not there? There are a few Australians on there, but it is absolutely dominated by the UK, Canada, America and Asia. It is not a difficult thing to just put your profile up there and join in the fun pitching for work.

The only other thing is an outcome that I have talked about with some of my colleagues and also with some local government groups I work with, and that is that I really think there is a need for a regional telecommunications and digital engagement policy. I have worked with DBI, which is now DSDBI, over the last few years. While I understand there is a Victorian technology plan and a Vic fibre plan, the rural and regional area really is different, and I think there needs to be some specific work done to look at how we engage across the board.

I will leave the Gippsland broadband engagement plan. I thought this had already been tendered. RDA Gippsland put in a submission. Bass Coast Shire Council put in a submission. I read them last night. There was no mention of the plan, even though they commissioned me to do it. Peter Francis was my client. I think they have done some great things locally; they have done a great job in implementing it. But I think there needs to be a much more holistic view of what that piece of work can do across regional Victoria.

The only other thing was something from Queensland that I would really like you to have a look at. It will be in my papers once they are tabled. There is a group called The Creative Collective, which is a group of creative types who do digital marketing, SEO and PR. They have formed a group and got funding through Skills Queensland to create a product called Get Up To Speed. That is exactly the terminology we have used today. Getuptospeed.com.au is the website. They have funding from the Queensland state government. I remember at the time a light bulb went off. I thought, 'I've been talking to the wrong arm of government about digital engagement'. I had gone to business innovation, I had gone to tech, I had gone to regional development — maybe it is skills. That model is getting a lot of traction and a lot of support, and I think we should strongly look at finding a way that rural and regional communities can get capability building online via those sorts of programs.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you very much, Jennifer, for giving us quite an informative presentation and for your very valuable time here today.

**Ms CROMARTY** — No problem.

**The CHAIR** — In a fortnight's time you will get a draft of the Hansard transcript. You will be able to correct obvious errors but you will not be able to change the substance of what you have said. Changes are subject to the committee's approval. Once again, thank you very much for coming along. It was a very informative half an hour. It has been very good.

**Ms CROMARTY** — Thank you for not falling asleep at the end of the day.

**The CHAIR** — Before we finish today I thank the University of Ballarat for hosting us today. It has been very much appreciated. It moved very smoothly and worked very well. Could you please pass that on to them?

**Mr DRUM** — And the kitchen.

**The CHAIR** — And the kitchen. It has all been very nice. I would also like to thank Hansard and the committee staff for their very valuable contributions here today.

**Committee adjourned.**