



Newsletter

December 2006

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc
GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001
Internet: www.nswfarmwriters.org

Farm Writers' Christmas Lunch – 13 December

THE Farm Writers' Association Christmas luncheon is just around the corner, with patron Minister for Natural Resources, Primary Industries and Mineral Resources Ian Macdonald, hosting the celebrations.

There's still time for corporate and individual members to get a table together or to host a table of guests for the 13 December function.

The lunch will be a great opportunity to thank business associates and clients or build new relationships.

Mr Macdonald will speak on the key issues facing the Government in his portfolio areas, particularly the effects of the worst drought in 100 years and the moves the Iemma Government has made to help farming communities.

Other issues to be touched on include the increasingly important role agricultural research is playing in NSW.

The Primary Industries and Mineral Resources portfolios cover agriculture, mining, forests and fisheries and include responsibility for the NSW Food Authority.

In August last year Mr Macdonald was also appointed Minister for Natural Resources with responsibility for native vegetation and water policy.

As in past years, the Farm Writers' Association is relying on the generosity of its members to provide some Christmas cheer through donations of gifts for this year's Christmas event.

Gifts (with a suggested value of \$25 or more) to be drawn at the luncheon would be greatly appreciated. This is a great way to get your company's logo out in front of a huge group of agricultural professionals.

Gifts can be sent to:

Suzie Ward
Agricultural Appointments
4th floor, 84 Pitt Street Sydney
(between Hunter Street and Martin Place and next door to Penfolds), and

Margaret McCullough
NSW Farmers Association
Level 10, 255 Elizabeth Street Sydney.

Join Farm Writers' Corporate Members of the Month National Australia Bank, Sunrice and Virbac to celebrate the Christmas season.

☞ **To book your place for the Christmas lunch go to our website: www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGGS.htm. To get your book of 6 (\$360) or 12 (\$720) vouchers, contact Richard.Hincks@rabobank.com.**



Farm Writers' patron Minister for Natural Resources, Primary Industries and Mineral Resources Ian Macdonald.

Reminder! Special General Meeting

Prior to the Christmas lunch, there will be a Special General Meeting of Farm Writers' at 11am on Wednesday, 13 December at Strangers' Dining Room, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, for the purpose of altering the constitution to reflect changes in current best practice for auditing accounts.

Register early and online for the luncheon on Wednesday, 13 December with Ian Macdonald

Corporate Members of the Month: National Australia Bank, Sunrice and Virbac

Venue: NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney

When: **Wednesday, 13 December at 12pm for 12:30pm**

Cost: \$60 per head, or voucher, for members. \$70 per head for all non-members

Register: **BEFORE 5:00pm on Sunday, 10 December**

online: www.nswfarmwriters.org, email: bookings@nswfarmwriters.org, phone: Sarah Robson (02) 8204 3730

Reminder: If bookings are not cancelled by the deadline, the person making the booking will be invoiced. We will do our best to accommodate late bookings and cancellations – please phone Sarah Robson on (02) 8204 3730.

Privatised Telstra's Next G outsmarts regulators

Contributed by Sally Edgar, OneProfile Communications

IN a high energy address to Farm Writers' members and guests on 24 November, Telstra Group Managing Director for Public Policy and Communications Dr Phil Burgess pointed to poor government policy for the lack of a sustainable telecommunications infrastructure for regional and rural areas.

His address followed the company's recent completion of the \$1 billion Next G mobile broadband network that offers high-speed wireless mobile and internet access to 98 per cent of the country.

However Next G was implemented as an alternative to other broadband options after negotiations to install the much-wanted fibre to node network (FTNN) collapsed between Telstra and the regulators.

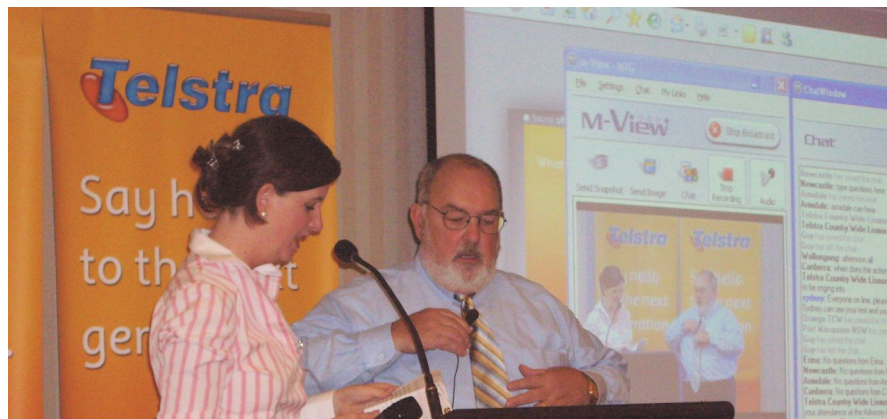
Because it is based on wireless technology, Dr Burgess said Next G did not meet with the regulatory problems of FTNN.

"By this stage we'd had plenty of experience working with the Government and butting our heads against brick walls, so Sol [Trujillo, Telstra's CEO] said let's build wireless, a technology that he was familiar with, and importantly one that was not as heavily regulated as the others," Dr Burgess said.

After building or refurbishing more than 5000 towers across the country, the Next G network was installed three months early and on budget. It provides Telstra customers with download speeds averaging 550 kilobytes per second (Kbps) to 1.5 megabytes per second (Mbps), and peak speeds of up to 3.6Mbps, increasing to 14.4Mbps early next year.

To demonstrate the Next G technology, Telstra Country Wide broadcast Dr Burgess's address live via a real time webcast using Next G enabled mobile phones to eight of its NSW regional locations, where 80 rural and regional-based people joined the audience and were able to ask questions or make comments via a 'chat room'. Farm Writers' hopes to do at least four webcasts during 2007.

Dr Burgess said the federal Government, the telecommunications



The Land journalist Lucy Skuthorp asked Telstra senior executive Dr Phil Burgess about the company's commitment to providing better telecommunications services to rural and regional areas. Telstra Country Wide's webcast can be seen in the background.

regulators and the broader industry needed to work together to provide Australia with functional infrastructure that allowed every person in the country to access fast, affordable internet speeds.

But in answering questions from the audience, Dr Burgess was quick to say that because Telstra was now fully privatised it was not its responsibility to make its Next G network available to other telcos, saying doing so would be detrimental to its shareholders.

"Other providers could install their own networks, but they're not because they do not want to invest in Australia. Our network is one of our major competitive advantages and it belongs to our shareholders. There needs to be an awakening in this country that Telstra is not a public company."

In the lead up to building the Next G network, Dr Burgess and Mr Trujillo toured rural and regional Australia and experienced first hand the tyranny of distance that remote areas know only as part of life.

The tour included a visit to Blackall in Queensland where extended delays because of slow internet download speeds continue to seriously restrict education and farming practices. Dr Burgess said the experience left Mr Trujillo determined to improve internet speeds.

"Sol said we should all be ashamed that school children in isolated areas download their school work at 512Kbps, when between one and 12Mbps is possible."

Dr Burgess said Australia's internet

speeds, as Rupert Murdoch said recently, were disgraceful.

"There should be serious discussion in the mainstream media about this, and there isn't, or this country will be left behind and won't be able to catch up."

"Australia has backward looking regulatory bodies who have to learn they can not micro-manage a revolution. And if the Australian public is happy to let this happen then we have to pay the consequences. The truth is that Australia's regulatory regime is anti-consumer and anti-innovation."

Dr Burgess is known widely as one of Telstra's controversial three amigos, who alongside Mr Trujillo came from the United States to help run the telco.

But Dr Burgess passionately told Farm Writers' that they "don't try to be controversial, we just try to tell the truth".

Thanks to November Corporate Member of the Month Integrated Marketing Communications.

November 2006

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

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