

16 November 2009

Hon Anne Tolley  
Minister of Education  
Parliament Buildings  
PO Box 18-041  
**Wellington, 6011**

Kia ora Minister

The Trustees of The Wellington Loop have asked me to write to you to express our appreciation for the additional support for school networks that you announced at the recent ULearn conference in Christchurch, as reported in the latest issue of *Interface*.

As a participant in the National Education Network trial, the schools that are part of The Wellington Loop are pleased that you have agreed to not only extend the trial but also expand the scope to 200 schools. With almost 10% of all schools connected, we believe this will provide the necessary critical mass in order to realise the benefits of an ultra-fast broadband connected environment.

We were disappointed to read about the recent research at Waikato University that claimed businesses were not seeing any productivity gains through the use of broadband. It is a rather surprising conclusion to reach, given the very limited deployment of “proper” broadband in New Zealand. We feel the same is true for schools. It is easy for critics to challenge the educational benefits being achieved from broadband, but with one or two exceptions most schools do not yet have access to the sort of bandwidths that are necessary to deliver these benefits. We believe that initiatives such as The Wellington Loop and others around the country are shaping the way for when we can expect real learning gains and school administration efficiencies.

We noted that the recent “ICT in Schools” report revealed that for a number of years now, over 70% principals believe that ICTs have improved curriculum delivery; they are now asking for more efficient ways to acquire and maintain robust ICT infrastructure. We believe that school loop developments provide a way to achieve this.

One of our member schools is a state integrated school and we are pleased that you have extended the School Network Upgrade programme to include them. We have a number of independent schools pressing to join The Wellington Loop and we are hoping that you might be able to find a way to help them as well.

We encourage you and your government to continue down the bold path you have set in shaping a broadband connected future for New Zealand and especially for schools. The Wellington Loop is happy to accompany you on this journey.

Naku noa, na

Laurence Zwimpfer  
**Chairperson**