



Media Release

It goes almost without saying that having access to world class broadband would deliver significant benefits to both Industry and the community at large.

Regrettably, Australia continues to lag well behind most other developed economies in the provision of high speed broadband and this has the real potential to stifle future economic growth & Australia's international competitiveness.

The Federal Governments recently released tender for the provision of fibre to the node network is intended to underpin the roll out of a national service designed to deliver much faster broadband speeds in an environment of equitable access.

Whilst the proposal at this stage is for an \$8 billion plus national network that is hoped will reach up to 98% of the population given the vast stretches of our country & the enormity of the issues involved in reaching our regional & rural communities the ultimate cost may well exceed of our these initial projections.

Stakeholders across the broad spectrum of our community in the west agree that this enhanced technology will have hugely positive impacts on areas such as education, health, professional services & employment. Our business's and the community at large have a lot at stake if we get this roll out wrong. If we are going to remain internationally competitive and develop businesses that will be globally competitive in the new millennium we must have access to and embrace this vastly improved infrastructure.

The national broadband network must facilitate real competition in the telecommunications sector via open access arrangements that will support a range of service providers having access to the network on equitable terms.

From a local perspective Melbourne's western suburbs continue to suffer from substandard services with regard to broadband coverage and access to its businesses and the residents at large and have the lowest of penetration & uptake of quality high speed telecommunications.

If the Melbourne west is going to be able to create more sustainable jobs within its community to support its rapidly growing population then access to this enhanced infrastructure is a critical prerequisite

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