



## MEDIA RELEASE

# TASMANIA SHOULD BE FIRST IN LINE FOR NEW NETWORK!

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

**Melbourne, VIC, 28 September 2008** – A representative of Digital Tasmania has today appeared before a Senate Committee hearing in Melbourne to call for Tasmania to be put at the top of the list when the **National Broadband Network (NBN)** is deployed.

Andrew Connor, spokesperson for Digital Tasmania said that “rather than a ‘roll out’ from already well serviced mainland metropolitan areas, the network should be ‘rolled in’ from regional and other under serviced areas to metro areas”.

Digital Tasmania also explained the background to Tasmania’s need for priority access to the NBN. Its limited choices, low take-up and high cost of broadband are due in major part to the unavailability of affordable connections into and around Tasmania. One solution to this is commercial activation of Tasmanian Government owned fibre networks and Basslink fibre.

Mr Connor said It’s now over 900 days since Tasmanians started paying for access to the fibre component of Basslink and it is yet to be activated. So far, Tasmanians have sent \$5.1 million dollars offshore for a service that is not yet available to them.

Digital Tasmania said that according to industry sources, activation of these fibre optic assets should lead to reduced Internet access charges for consumers by at least \$15/month through a reduction in wholesale costs and an increase in competition.

Digital Tasmania also sought assurances that no broadband user would be worse off cost-wise on the new network and that it would be constructed with a Fibre-To-The-Premises (FTTP) architecture to ensure that it is fully future proofed. FTTP is already in limited use in Tasmania under the TasCOLT trial.

The Senate Select Committee on the National Broadband Network was established to inquire into the Australian Government’s proposal to partner with the private sector to provide minimum broadband speeds of 12 megabits per second to 98 per cent of Australians on an open access basis. The Australian Government will invest \$4.7 billion in this new network.

The committee is scheduled to hand down its report in March 2009.  
Tenders for the NBN close in late November with a winner announced early in 2009.

### About Digital Tasmania:

Digital Tasmania is a consumer action group, created to give a voice to the views and needs of Tasmanian consumers in the digital age. More information including its submission to the Senate Committee can be found on the group’s website, <http://www.digitaltasmania.org>

TasCOLT:  
<http://www.tascolt.com.au>

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*For further comment or to schedule an interview, contact Digital Tasmania on 0432 870 881, or email [media@digitaltasmania.org](mailto:media@digitaltasmania.org)*