



MEDIA RELEASE

TASMANIA FIRST IN LINE FOR NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Launceston, TAS, 7 April 2009 – Digital Tasmania today congratulated the Tasmanian Government on their initiative in submitting a proposal for the Federal Government's National Broadband Network (NBN).

The Federal Government today confirmed they would fast track negotiation with the State Government around adapting their Tasmanian NBN submission within the next 24 hours.

Andrew Connor, spokesperson for Digital Tasmania said that the NBN expert panel's identification of the Tasmanian proposal as being worthy of fast-track Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) deployment would put Tasmania at the forefront of broadband in Australia.

"Not only will this NBN raise Australia's standing in the international digital economy, but at the state level, it will raise Tasmanians from being the poor cousins to the top of the broadband pile."

"Obviously there's quite a lot of detail that we still need to get across, but broadly we're very supportive of the plan."

"Full credit must go to the current Tasmanian Government for the initiative shown in lodging a proposal. It was a bold move, and it appears set to deliver tremendous dividends for every Tasmanian business and consumer who relies on high speed broadband access. We look forward to more detail from the State Government as to their plans and a timeline for deployment."

"Digital Tasmania recognises the significant effort made by the Tasmanian Government not only with its proposal but also with the TasCOLT FTTP trial and the work done by the TECC. This has contributed to Tasmanian's proposal being a model for the nation."

Mr Connor said the project had the potential to transform the IT industry in the state and proves Tasmania has the skills, technology and determination to construct a nation-leading network

"As the first place in which the NBN is to be rolled out, Tasmanians in the telecommunications industry stand to gain significant expertise in deployment of FTTP networks in Australia. There is a tremendous opportunity also for Tasmania in training and re-skilling people for the estimated 37,000 jobs this network rollout will create."

"Finally, the arrival of affordable high speed internet access to our local software and multimedia businesses will allow them to further compete on an international stage."

Digital Tasmania said that in any plan there was always some room for improvement, identifying the reach of FTTP deployments as one concern.

"We're disappointed with the national target of 90% for FTTP and would sincerely hope that is treated as a minimum here. Otherwise, we're looking at 50,000 Tasmanians who will be unable to access 100Mbps broadband speeds, which is not an insignificant amount."

"We recognise that there is a commercial reality involved in this process, however every effort should be made to deliver equitable access to those Tasmanians who might otherwise be left out."

Digital Tasmania also welcomed the recent announcement of Internode as the first internet service provider to sign on to use the Basslink fibre optic cable, with activation now expected in mid May 2009.

"It's been an exciting few weeks for the IT industry in Tasmania and we hope the positive news keeps coming."

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 can be found on the group's website, <http://www.digitaltasmania.org>

TECC: www.TECC.com.au TasColt: 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