

ATUG Focus 13 May 2009

ATUG Focus this week is on Regional Communications in the lead up to our 7th Annual Regional Communications Conference in Canberra on 21-22 May .

In the Budget 2009 additional funding was provided for Rural and Regional NBN Initiatives to drive broadband benefits for communities

http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2009/043

Regional, rural and remote communities will realise the benefits of broadband through the new \$80 million Rural and Regional National Broadband Network Initiative included in the 2009–10 Budget.

"This initiative builds on the Government's significant investment in the National Broadband Network (NBN) by supporting initiatives that improve service delivery and promote broadband take-up and use in regional, rural and remote communities," the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy said.

The Government's initiative includes three measures:

- \$15.3 million over three years for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to expand its ABC Local Regional Broadband Hubs
- an additional \$14 million over four years to boost the Digital Regions Initiative funding to \$60 million
- \$5 million over four years to fund Rural NBN Coordinators.

These initiatives will be discussed in more detail at ATUG conference <http://www.atug.com.au/>

The **Minister Steven Conroy** is pushing ahead with NBN decisions at quick pace as reported in the Minister's speech to the National Press Club on 28 April:

<http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/speeches/2009/013>

http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2009/041

- The National Broadband Network Company has been established and I note states are jostling to host its headquarters.
- The Government will announce the appointment of an executive search firm to assist in the selection of the board and chief executive of the company.
- Negotiations are progressing with the Tasmanian Government to commence an early rollout of a FTTP network and next generation wireless in Tasmania by July.
- We have commenced consultation on our \$250 million priority broadband backhaul investment for regional Australia. Following the close for submissions to the consultation in early May, we will begin a competitive tender process for the backhaul rollouts. Construction on this element is expected begin as soon as September.
- We advertised for the appointment of a lead adviser for the implementation study process. This advisor will report on the operating arrangements for the National Broadband Network Company in early 2010.
- In addition, the first legislation required to underpin the National Broadband Network will be introduced in the winter sittings.
- This includes a Bill to require greenfield developments to use FTTP technology from 1 July 2010 and for the Government to acquire network information needed to assist in the design of the national FTTP rollout.
- Furthermore, consultation has started on legislative reforms to make the existing regulatory framework work more effectively. Submissions are due by early June, with legislation to be introduced before the end of the year.

The **Shadow Minister Nick Minchin** will update the conference on the Oppositions views:

<http://www.nickminchin.com.au/news/default.asp?action=article&ID=65>

Under his latest proposal Senator Conroy claims 90 per cent of the population will get fibre to the premise connections of 100 megabits per second, with the remaining 10 per cent or more than 2 million, to get speeds of 12 megabits delivered through wireless and satellite services," Senator Minchin said.

"The Minister has already made it perfectly clear that more than 500,000 Australians living in towns of around 1000 or less people will not get fibre to the premise, but he must now come clean on where the other 1.5 million are located.

"Labor's plan to spend billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to create new classes of broadband 'haves' and have nots' is quite rightly sparking outrage in rural and regional centres across the country.

"It is clear that many rural and regional centres with far more than 1000 people will also miss out on the 100 megabits and it is time Senator Conroy released detailed coverage maps to show which areas will get what," Senator Minchin said.

The **Chairman of the ACCC Graeme Samuel** addressed ATUG Annual Update Conference in March on the need for industry to be responsive to customers needs and will provide an update on ACCC views at the Regional Conference:

With the Government's National Broadband Network process underway, there has been much debate and discussion over the future of next generation access in Australia. The ACCC has played a significant role in the NBN process in terms of providing the Government's Expert Panel with detailed advice and a framework for assessing what a future telecommunications environment might look like. At the moment though, the NBN process is in the hands of the Government so I won't be discussing it any further today.

But the ACCC's role in relation to access regulation is merely one aspect of our involvement in the telecommunications sector.

I would like to put the focus squarely where it should be at a conference hosted by a telecommunications users group – on consumers.

The ACCC is putting the telecommunications industry on notice. Misleading advertising, unfair contracts, inadequate disclosure and subscription scams are all in the ACCC's sights. Standards must improve or risk increased scrutiny and action.

<http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/863885/fromItemId/8973>

On the practical front the Conference will showcase and discuss a number of **Clever Networks** projects, which are early examples of the difference broadband can make. This exciting panel will be moderated by Keith Besgrove, DBCDE. The projects will be presented by Anne Dening, TAFE SA Barossa Valley Campus - **TAFE@Your PC** - Omar Khalifa, Managing Director, NFPOne - **Starlight Digital** - Paul Pettigrew, Managing Director, Mach Technology Group - **Cooroy Knowledge Precinct** - Bruce Winzar, Chief Information Officer, Loddon Mallee Health Alliance - **Loddon Mallee Virtual Trauma and Critical Care Unit**

State Governments will update delegates on their programs and projects to support the availability of broadband and digital economy issues in a panel forum with an opportunity for Q&A followed by interactive discussion. Confirmed speakers include Tony Gates, Infrastructure, NSW - Andrew Skewes, MultiMedia and Jim Wyatt, Economic Development Tasmania.

A workshop on **Fibre to the Home** will be an opportunity to learn more about the technology, construction issues and the benefits of an all fibre world. Members of the FTTH workshop include Michael Gallaty, ADC Krone - Stefan Keller-Tuberg, Alcatel Lucent - Jim Wyatt, Department of Economic Development, Tasmania - Matthew Dummett, MultiMedia Victoria. A lively Q&A and discussion is expected!!

For more information and to register for the event [click here](#).