

ATUG's Focus this week is on the Digital Economy with the Minister, Stephen Conroy releasing the roadmap for Australia's participation in the digital economy, Australia's Digital Economy: Future Directions. Australia's Digital Economy: Future Directions is available online: www.dbcde.gov.au/digital_economy/final_report

The digital economy is defined as the global network of economic and social activities that are enabled by platforms such as the Internet, mobile and sensor networks.

The digital economy refers to the devices most of us use each day such as computers, phones and game consoles. It includes the online maps that we consult, the web searches that we do to find information and our electronic banking.

A successful digital economy is seen as essential for Australia's economic growth and our ability to maintain our international standing. It offers new opportunities for businesses to a larger, potentially global, audience and for individuals to connect and collaborate.

ATUG participated in the consultations leading to the release of the Final Report and is holding an ongoing dialogue on the key policy issues through a series of Future Forums on the Digital Economy. The next events are:

- Newcastle: 22nd July
- Melbourne: 24th July
- Sydney: 4th August
- Brisbane: 26th August

Beyond the Future Forums, ATUG is also exploring the idea of a Digital Economy Stakeholders Group to provide a forum for ongoing dialogue and action on the cross-sector issues that will arise and will need co-ordinated action by government, industry and consumer groups.

ATUG is interested to hear from our members in all sectors of the economy on the challenges and opportunities ahead in the development of Australia's Digital Economy for their sector – banking/finance/insurance, manufacturing, construction, health and community services, retail, transport and storage, mining, property and business services, education, energy, tourism and recreation.

The paper Australia's Digital Economy: Future Directions explains:

- why the digital economy is important for Australia
- the current state of digital economy engagement in Australia and why current metrics point to a need for strategic action
- the elements of a successful digital economy
- the role for the Government in developing Australia's digital economy.

Advancing Australia's digital economy requires action by government, industry and the community. The key areas of focus for government, industry and the community in order to maximise the benefits of the digital economy for all Australians are:

- for Government, to:
 - lay the foundations Australia's digital infrastructure
 - facilitate innovation
 - set conducive regulatory frameworks
- for industry, to:
 - demonstrate digital confidence and build digital skills
 - adopt smart technology
 - develop sustainable online content models
- for the community, to:
 - enjoy digital confidence and digital media literacy skills
 - experience inclusive digital participation
 - benefit through online engagement.

The paper discusses the key initiatives being undertaken by government, industry and the community in each of these key areas. It also includes case studies of Australians from a diversity of industries who have successfully engaged with the digital economy. Other Government initiatives to grow Australia's Digital Economy include:

- *The Digital Education Revolution* – a \$2 billion, five-year commitment to build Australia's digital media literacy amongst school children.
- *Enterprise Connect*: providing business advisory services to small and medium enterprises to help increase their productivity.
- *Small Business Online*: promoting the benefits of the digital economy to Australian SME's, helping them take advantage of e-business opportunities and to expand their online presence.
- *Government Innovation*: the Government has recently established an independent Government 2.0 Taskforce to advise on a range of issues that relate to the emerging agenda of online engagement.
- *Smart Technology*: to demonstrate the ability of technology to make our existing energy infrastructure smarter, the Government will invest \$100 million in the National Energy Efficiency Initiative.

Videos from the launch are at the Department's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5_D5f_pQQQ)