



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **BROADBAND NETWORK: A FOUNDATION FOR PRODUCTIVITY**

Statement by Heather Ridout  
Chief Executive Australian Industry Group

“With today’s National Broadband Network announcement, the first stages of the rollout can now commence and Australian businesses and households are that much closer to having widespread access to very fast broadband,” Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) Chief Executive Mrs Heather Ridout said today.

“Ai Group’s own research suggests that two thirds of Australian businesses expect to benefit greatly from the spread of high speed broadband. The ambitious, higher-speed nature of the new proposal will add further to the scope for these important productivity gains.

“Naturally there are a lot of questions yet to be answered about the unexpected public-private partnership model; about the regulatory arrangements governing involvement in and access to the new network; and about the eventual sell-down of the Government’s initial majority shareholding. With such a big and important investment, total transparency at all stages in the development of the new Network is essential.

“A critical element in the development of the Network will be to ensure that domestic businesses have full and fair opportunities to contribute to the rollout. We welcome the Government’s commitment to investigate how these opportunities can be provided as part of the implementation study,” Mrs Ridout said.

“While competitively priced suppliers from other countries will of course be involved in this important project, at the same time both the network builders themselves and the prime contractors should make firm undertakings to fully inform domestic businesses about opportunities for their participation and to ensure they are given fair access to project opportunities. The existing Industry Capability Network that assists businesses make the most of purchasing opportunities arising from purchasing requirements would be an ideal platform.

“Ensuring domestic suppliers have good, solid and fair access will add substantially to the domestic economic benefits of the roll-out and the economic stimulus which is so important in these difficult economic times,” Mrs Ridout said.

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