

## Broadband costs lose touch with reality

Thursday, April 09, 2009

**Source:** John Forrest MP

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is sending Australia down the financial plug-hole with his plans to spend \$43 billion on a brand new broadband network, according to John Forrest, Federal Member for Mallee “This is popularism taken to the extreme and dangerous to the Nation’s long term ability to provide essential services to all Australians,” Mr Forrest said. “This Prime Minister is on a borrowing frenzy and has completely lost touch with responsible fiscal management. “How long is it going to take for Australians to wake up to this man,” Mr Forrest asks. “Nobody knows if Mr Rudd’s new national broadband infrastructure network is commercially viable. Blind Freddy knows it will be a network most Australians will likely be unwilling to pay the cost to subscribe, estimated at over \$200 per month “This Prime Minister is running up national debt at an alarming rate. His new plan has jumped from an election promise of \$4.7 billion to speed up broadband in a more natural progression, to an amazing \$43 billion, nearly ten times as much. “How many Australians need a super-charged 100 megabits a second when it is costing an extra \$38 billion. “And, at the end of the day, it won’t happen because it is not commercially viable and the rest is cynical politics. What a gross manipulation of the hearts and minds of Australians”, Mr Forrest said “This is just another bright idea because the government’s pledge to subsidise a national broadband network operator fell over because they botched the tender, and now the Rudd Government wants to save face. I’ve said before, This Government couldn’t organize a chook raffle, nor keep it on time, and certainly not on budget “We all want faster broadband, but at a cost which is affordable and without plunging our grandchildren in to massive debt. “Broadband speeds in our major cities are already pretty good, so how much would it really cost to bring the rest of Australia up to speed, especially that 10 percent of regional Australian communities that will be denied the premium fibre to the premises service proposed under the Rudd plan.” Mr Forrest said government bureaucracies could never get the financial outcomes of private enterprise, particularly in communications where technology was changing so rapidly.

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