



Australian
Telecommunications
Users Group

Media Release

Australia Telecommunications Users Group 4th Annual Regional Conference
Collaborate, Communicate, Innovate

The Australian Telecommunications Users Group (ATUG) will hold its 4th Annual Regional Conference on the 15th and 16th of May, 2006 at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. The developments over the last six months in telco policy and technology make communications in regional Australia a hot topic for community groups, government and industry.

Long time advocate of telecommunication advances for regional Australia, ATUG is focusing this year on practical outcomes. Managing Director Rosemary Sinclair commented, "In 2006 we will be sharing the success stories and encouraging more regions to become involved in getting results for their communities".

In 2003, ATUG held its 1st regional conference, defining the key issues that had to be tackled to bring the latest communications services to regional communities. Three years on, legislation introduced in 2005 to support the sale of Telstra saw the Universal Service obligation reconfirmed, Customer Service Guarantee and National Reliability Framework policies restated, the Telstra Local Presence Plan introduced and the Independent Regional Review process secured. The T3 announcement was also accompanied by the most significant increase ever in funding for communications services in regional areas – the \$3 billion Connect Australia package.

The 2006 conference will provide an opportunity to share the success stories and experiences of backhaul and service providers, demand aggregation brokers, and local councils, and the strategies of State and Federal government to accelerate and extend access to new services. Education, health, government services, agri-business and tourism are among the sectors that will be reviewed in the case studies.

Some of the key speakers at the ATUG 2006 Regional Conference will include;

Senator The Hon Helen Coonan, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, **Senator Stephen Conroy**, Shadow Minister for Communications and Information Technology, **Senator Fiona Nash** - Nationals' Senator for NSW, **Ewan Sutherland** - International speaker, **Simon Bryant** - DCITA, **Michael Cosgrave** - ACCC, **Colin Griffith** - NSW Government Chief Information Office **Ron Cooke** - Multimedia Victoria, **Dan Scherr** - Department of Industry and Resources (WA), **Dr Brian Richards** - e-Health, **Dr Peter Brain** – Australian Local Government Association.

The ATUG 2006 Regional Conference is a must for any person or organisation interested in the upgrade of communications services in regional areas.

For the full ATUG 2006 Regional Conference program and for registration information, please go to <http://www.atug.com.au/atug2006RegionalConf.cfm>