

## Speech Summary

Senator Stephen Conroy – Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (Australia)

“Australian Broadband – status and challenges”

Broadband is the foundation for the digital economy  
CeBIT – Tuesday 3 March 2009

- The digital economy promises many opportunities for growth and development – social and economic.
- In Australia we have placed a high priority on developing our digital economy.
- Nations around the world recognise broadband as the foundation for the digital economy.
- They are also seeing it as an economic stimulus.
- In Australia we understand the need for long-term infrastructure planning – and broadband is part of our plans.
- Australia is investing in the National Broadband Network.
- Australia is a wide land and there are challenges to deliver universal service.
- However, regional areas are poised to benefit strongly in the digital economy.
- These benefits will also be felt across the economy –manufacturing, transport, government services, education, energy, health, and others.
- Broadband vital but so is a plan for the future.
- Australia is building with industry a road-map to maximise digital take-up across all sectors of the economy.
- Together we can ensure we make the most of our infrastructure investments and generate benefits for all Australians.

## **Suggested Questions**

- The current Australian Government has only been in office just over one year. I understand you took your plans for the National Broadband Network to the 2007 federal election. How significant was this as an election issue?
- You describe some of the benefits the people of York Peninsula are getting from broadband. Are you making the point that many people in rural and regional areas of Australia are currently missing out on these benefits and the National Broadband Network will address that?
- Australia seems to have been ahead of the trend to implement broadband as an economic stimulus. Just how importantly do you rate broadband as an economic stimulus?
- You mentioned working with industry to propagate digital technologies across all sectors of the economy. Why have you taken that role and not left it to the IT industry to facilitate itself?