

Launch of Broadband CEO Survey Report 21 October 2008, Canberra

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Welcome to the launch of *High Speed to Broadband*, our latest report in our series of National CEO surveys conducted in partnership with Deloitte.

Welcome Minister Senator Stephen Conroy - Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

We also have with us Damien Tampling from Deloitte who I will pass over to shortly to introduce Senator Conroy. First mention a few major points from the report:

1) Productivity - Vindicates the argument that broadband will deliver major productivity gains.

As the Minister himself has commented *“we don't just want faster and more affordable broadband, we need it”*.

- Over 93% of companies indicated that the internet has had a positive impact on their efficiency/productivity.
- 66% of businesses believe their business will benefit greatly from faster broadband.
- 69.7% of regional firms would see a great benefit from faster broadband.
- 36% of businesses expect large increases in financial activity with faster broadband is expected to lead to for, with

2) Point about lagging behind: World Economic Forum report showed Australia lagging behind other developed countries in several crucial areas, including: 29th in terms of cost of broadband and 19th for the number of high speed broadband subscriptions 23rd for access to digital content.

3) Therefore report reinforces need to press ahead in current economic environment.

- We are reassured by the Government's commitment
- However – impact on cost and availability of finance.
- Vital to look afresh at ways in which public-private partnerships can be delivered.

4) Pricing and Access

It is imperative that we get the pricing and access regimes for our National Broadband Network right. These are deeply complex issues that provide challenges for Government and industry alike. What is clear, at this stage, is the need to ensure that the correct policy framework goes hand-in-hand with any deployment of fibre on the ground

5) Skills

Businesses of all sizes lacked the capability to maximize gains from high speed broadband – particularly so for small companies:

- Almost a third (29.6%) of small firms indicated they have a low degree of skills which would prevent them seizing opportunities arising from the deployment of high speed broadband.

The report reinforces what our own instincts tell us: High speed broadband will significantly boost our productivity and it is really necessary.

Thank you.