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AUSTRALIAN BROADBAND GUARANTEE

The \$162.5 million Australian Broadband Guarantee will provide universal access to metro-comparable broadband services across Australia.

The Australian Broadband Guarantee will fill in any remaining broadband blackspots—whether in metropolitan or rural Australia. The Australian Broadband Guarantee follows on from the success of the \$878 million Broadband Connect program and the \$50 million Metro Broadband Connect program.

How does it work?

The Australian Broadband Guarantee operates in a very simple way. Any Australian resident or small business who is unable to access a metro-comparable broadband service at their principal residence is eligible to receive a subsidised service under the Guarantee; either a satellite service or a registered terrestrial service if it is available.

As under the Broadband Connect program, Australian Broadband Guarantee services will be price-capped and will be required to perform at a guaranteed minimum level of service.

Consumers will be able to check the availability of suitable broadband services in their area through the program's online Broadband Locator, available at www.dcita.gov.au/broadband If there is no service available to their premises they can receive a subsidised service.

The Australian Broadband Guarantee will replace the Broadband Connect incentive program and the Metro Broadband Connect program.

How does the Australian Broadband Guarantee differ from the Broadband Connect incentive program?

There are many similarities between the highly successful Broadband Connect incentive program and the Australian Broadband Guarantee. Both programs operate by making payments to registered Internet providers who provide suitable broadband services to eligible customers at eligible premises.

However the Australian Broadband Guarantee is different in a number of respects. It is simpler and more carefully targeted to customers in need, recognising that commercial developments in metropolitan markets, and the Government's Broadband Connect Infrastructure program in regional areas, will be the primary means of delivering improved, high quality broadband services to most Australians.

From the customer's perspective the Australian Broadband Guarantee looks very similar to the Broadband Connect incentive program, but eligibility requirements will be simpler and checking eligibility will be easier.

From the provider's perspective there are some important differences, designed to simplify processes, and target service provision more tightly to underserved premises.

Will this program give all Australians access to broadband at metro-comparable prices?

Yes. Wherever you are living in Australia, if you can't access a terrestrial broadband service at a reasonable price and service quality you will qualify for the Australian Broadband Guarantee.

It will enable a smooth transition to the delivery of next generation high speed broadband services, including through the \$600 million Broadband Connect Infrastructure program for rural, regional and remote Australia.

How much is the government putting into the Australian Broadband Guarantee?

The Government will allocate \$162.5 million to the Australian Broadband Guarantee to 30 June 2008. This is in addition to the \$600 million being invested in the Broadband Connect Infrastructure program.

When does it start and when will it end?

The guidelines for the Australian Broadband Guarantee program will be released on 2 April 2007 and providers will be invited to register from that date.

The first phase of the program will end on 30 June 2008 when it will be reviewed. Funds from the earnings of the Government's Communications Fund will be available from 1 July 2008 to continue the Australian Broadband Guarantee in the limited areas where high quality broadband services might still not be available.