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Australian
Telecommunications
Users Group

Media Release

ATUG Welcomes Fibre National Broadband Network and Telco Sector Reform

Speaking at ATUG's 7th Annual Regional Communications Conference, Managing Director, Rosemary Sinclair, said the group welcomed the Government's commitment to a Fibre to the Premises National Broadband Network for Australia. The use of wireless and satellite technologies in difficult terrain and remote areas would mean much faster broadband services for all Australians at affordable prices.

ATUG supports Regulatory Reform in the telecommunications sector including the need for clear separation between wholesale and retail units in fixed network markets. "After almost two decades of trying to deal with these issues, the need for separation has been proven. There is no other way to deal with the serious conflict of interest problems which impact on competition and consumers," Sinclair said.

ATUG wants to see action to make it easier for customers to change broadband services providers. "End users would walk the talk on broadband competition to get better prices and services, if it was easier to switch between providers. Information from the TIO shows customers trying to exercise choice get lost in the process." Change is needed well ahead of the NBN roll-out according to Sinclair.

ATUG's Regional Roadshow has now visited 70 centres and travelled over 100,000 kilometres to talk to end users in regional areas about advanced communication services. Feedback confirms regional communities understand the potential of a high speed broadband network in supporting a digital economy. Creating jobs, growing businesses and supporting innovation are key outcomes for regional areas.

ATUG welcomed the progress by Government in raising the issue of excessive costs for international mobile roaming services in international forums and looks forward to lower prices. "Any device, anywhere at any time and for any service is a great promise by industry. But it can't be at any price. Current prices for roaming services are getting in the way of doing business for export focused companies" Sinclair told the conference.

In 2009 ATUG will hold a national series of Future Forums on the Digital Economy, discussing what needs to be done to ensure Australia's business users get the maximum benefit from the rollout of high speed broadband.

The 7th Annual Regional conference is being held in Canberra 21-22 May –
www.atug.com.au 21 May 2009

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