

# DOING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR AUSTRALIA

The Howard  
Government



## ADVANCED, ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In 1997 the Howard Government decided to open up telecommunications to full competition. Back then, there were just three telecommunications carriers. By May 2007 there were 167.

As a result of full competition, the overall average price for telecommunication services has, since 1997, fallen by 30.6%. The benefits of cheaper telecommunications are substantial, with the flow on effect of lower prices (leaving more money in consumers' pockets and on businesses' bottom lines) estimated to have added more than \$15 billion to the size of our economy.

Since 1996, the Howard Government has made available \$4.1 billion for broadband and telecommunications, which has already extended mobile phone coverage to 98.8% of the population and high speed broadband coverage to over 90% of the population.

In June 2007, the Howard Government put forward Australia Connected – a nation building broadband solution that will revolutionise communications in Australia.

The centrepiece of *Australia Connected* is the immediate rollout of a new state of the art wireless, ADSL2+ and fibre broadband network that will extend high speed broadband to 99% of the population and provide speeds of 12 megabits per second by 2009. These

high speeds will enable live video streaming, five minute movie downloads, five second CD downloads and multi-channel television.

Importantly, these fast speeds will be delivered across Australia at prices of between \$35 and \$60 per month, depending on the package chosen by the customer.

The Howard Government has established the \$2 billion Communications Fund to future proof the bush by spending the interest earned (at least \$400 million every three years) on upgrading mobile phone and broadband infrastructure in rural and regional areas.

The Howard Government has also introduced the Customer Service Guarantee which guarantees timely phone installations and fault repairs plus compensation payments to customers of up to \$50 per day. The Universal Service Obligation has also been tightened to provide customers with interim services if Telstra is unable to install new services within set timeframes.

The Howard Government will work hard to deliver even better telecommunications, through competition, strong consumer protections, targeted assistance and a strong economy to enable ongoing investment by government and the private sector.



For more information about our achievements and plans for the future

