



# Media release

From the Treasurer and Minister for Communication and Information Technology

Tuesday, 14 April, 2009

## VICTORIA STAMPS CLAIM FOR NATIONAL BROADBAND BASE

Victoria today launched a strong bid to become the home base of Australia's new \$43 billion National Broadband Network.

Treasurer and Minister for Information and Communication Technology John Lenders said basing the headquarters in Melbourne could create many thousands of highly skilled jobs for Victorian families.

"The Brumby Government is taking action to deliver the highly skilled jobs of the future," Mr Lenders said.

"Today I am launching Victoria's bid to be the home for the National Broadband Network – the biggest infrastructure project in the nation's history. I will be presenting Victoria's case to my colleagues in Canberra and fighting for a significant jobs boost in our impressive ICT sector.

"If successful, this project will create an army of Victorian jobs including construction workers, software engineers, electronics technicians, photonics experts and would be a welcome boost for our manufacturing industry.

"No other city in the nation has the telecommunications capability, such a skilled workforce ready to embark on a project like this and is in the ideal geographic location to become the centre of the project.

"We are already known as the nation's telecommunications hub with over a third of Australia's ICT industry based in Victoria – including many companies set to play a critical role in the rollout of the National Broadband Network.

"It makes sense to have the organisation looking after the NBN located near main suppliers, like Pacific Broadband Networks, who are based in Victoria.

"The National Broadband Network will create thousands of jobs as it is rolled out across the country and will also help businesses create the jobs of the future."

Mr Lenders said Victoria had particularly skilled telecommunications practitioners, with expertise in network integration, software, technical architecture, satellite engineering and orbital analysis, design, planning, operations and management, and a steady supply of talented graduates.

He said Victoria had international standing as an R&D hub for broadband, with Australia's leading centre for optical communications research, ultra-broadband information networks and the only laboratory that has expertise in optical communications systems.

"Centres such as the Photonics Research Laboratory at the University of Melbourne, the ARC Special Research Centre for Ultra-Broadband Information Networks (CUBIN) and the Victoria Research Laboratory of NICTA are world-leaders in optical fibre communications and fibre-to-the-home systems."

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Professor Rob Evans, Victorian Director of NICTA, Australia's leading information and technology research centre, said Melbourne would be a natural home for the rollout of such a large communications project.

"Victoria's long-standing contribution to telecommunications in Australia makes its bid to become the home of one of the world's biggest broadband projects perfect sense and will set the state up for years of highly skilled jobs," Professor Evans said.

Mr Lenders said the Brumby Government was already a leader in delivering fibre-to-the-premises infrastructure. It was the first government to deploy fibre-to-the-home in a new housing estate: in the Aurora Estate, in the City of Whittlesea in 2006, and has continued to provide fibre to the premises in many commercial and all new residential developments.

"The Brumby Government has already committed to build fibre links from Bendigo to Mildura and Geelong to Warrnambool, under our \$20 million VicFibreLINKS program," Mr Lenders said.

"Key national regulators, such as the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) both base their telecommunications functions in Melbourne, for good reason.

"Basing the new NBN entity in Melbourne will capitalise on Victoria's major telecommunications strengths for the benefit of the whole country."