



# Media Release

Minister for State and Regional Development and Minister for  
Information & Communication Technology

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Monday, 14 November 2005

## ***MOVING FORWARD: IMPROVED BROADBAND ACCESS FOR REGIONAL AREAS***

Regional Victorian residents will have improved access and more affordable broadband services announced today as part of *Moving Forward* - the Bracks Government's \$502 million action plan for growth in Provincial Victoria released today

The Minister for State and Regional Development, John Brumby, and Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Marsha Thomson, said the Government would spend **\$6 million** to ensure better access to next generation broadband.

*"Moving Forward* will help attract people, jobs and investment to Provincial Victoria, deliver infrastructure and skills, support small towns and work with local councils to manage growth and quality of life," Mr Brumby said.

*"Moving Forward* is part of our Government's plans to make Provincial Victoria the best place to live, work, invest and raise a family."

Ms Thomson said under *Moving Forward*, the Bracks Government would encourage investment by telecommunications companies to deliver improved broadband access at affordable prices through contestable infrastructure grants.

*"This project will build on the success of existing government initiatives and support the development and use of the best and latest broadband technology in regional areas,"* Ms Thomson said.

*"Initially the project will target two regions, the Grampians and Loddon, but could be extended state-wide."*

Ms Thomson said a new \$150,000 Victorian Teleworking Strategy would be developed in a bid to rapidly boost growing telecommuting and home-based businesses.

*"The Strategy will help identify infrastructure and services needed to boost telecommuting and improve operations of home-based businesses while opening up new business opportunities,"* Ms Thomson said.

*"The Bracks Government will work with local councils, regional businesses, communities and industry groups to develop the Strategy."*

Mr Brumby said the project would add to the range of initiatives outlined in the Bracks Government's Broadband Framework.

*"The Victorian Government has taken the lead by using the rollout of broadband to government to drive new private sector investment that will benefit regional communities,"* Mr Brumby said.

“This has facilitated well over \$100 million in telecommunications infrastructure investment in Victoria.

“Information and communications services, like broadband, drive economic and social development.

“Improved access for provincial communities will ensure regionally-based industries have a level playing field in business.

“The Bracks Government is already providing improved services through the smart purchasing of Government telecommunications including the *VicSmart Initiative* which is connecting 1600 government schools across the state to high speed broadband connections.”

Mr Brumby said *Moving Forward* demonstrated the leadership of the Bracks Government in growing the whole of the State.

“In six years, we have reversed the population decline in the regions, while investment, agricultural production, employment and building approvals are at all time highs.

“A new spirit of optimism in regional communities is accompanied by new challenges.

“*Moving Forward* will provide an action plan for growth and prosperity in Provincial Victoria over the next decade,” Mr Brumby said.

For more information about *Moving Forward* visit [www.business.vic.gov.au/movingforward](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/movingforward).