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## **BRACKS GOVERNMENT TELCO DEAL DELIVERS BROADBAND COMPETITION TO SHEPPARTON**

Businesses and residents in Shepparton are set to benefit from the rollout of competitive broadband services as a result of a Bracks Government's telecommunications deal, the Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Marsha Thomson, said today.

"Optus is rolling out \$20 million worth of broadband infrastructure across Victoria as part of its Telecommunications Purchasing and Management Strategy (TPAMS) contract with the Bracks Government," Ms Thomson said.

"This is a real coup for businesses and consumers in Shepparton who will now have the benefit of competition in the broadband market for the first time.

"The Bracks Government has paved the way for increased competition in the telecommunications market as a direct result of its contract with Optus for fixed voice services."

The broadband infrastructure – known as DSLAMs (Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexers) will be installed in Shepparton to provide people with increased access to high-grade voice and data services, establishing competitive alternatives in regional areas.

"This is another example of the Bracks Government teaming with industry to achieve benefits for Victorian businesses and home users," Ms Thomson said.

The Government's broadband goals are outlined in the Broadband Framework, released by Ms Thomson, in April.

"This Government's objective is to enable Victoria to have extensive broadband infrastructure, including a mix of platforms and technologies, to deliver quality services at fair prices by 2010," Ms Thomson said.

"Optus' DSLAM rollout is part of a telecommunications infrastructure investment program worth more than \$100 million over the next three years which was secured through the TPAMS process.

"The Bracks Government's aggregated purchasing strategy has exceeded all targets, becoming the most successful telecommunications deal brokered in Australia.

"Aiming to reduce government telecommunications costs by \$73 million over five years, TPAMS contracts have in fact lowered costs by almost \$200 million for that period, plus securing more than \$100 million worth of infrastructure to be delivered across the state as part of the contracts.

"This strategic approach to telecommunications procurement is delivering tangible benefits for Victorians through not only better public services delivered through state-of-the-art technology, but with the a flow-on effect to the wider community through investment in infrastructure, leading to more competition and lower prices."