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AURORA: A WIRED NEW WORLD IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

A new housing development in Melbourne's north is a pointer to the future of new housing, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Marsha Thomson said today.

Ms Thomson was visiting the Aurora housing estate in Epping which will be Australia's first large scale open housing development to have optic fibre connection to each of its 8000 homes as a standard feature.

"Through the Fibre to The Home (FTTH) project every household at Aurora will be connected to the world through high speed fibre optic cabling with all the attendant advantages for people's home and working lives," she said.

"Not only will it enable internet access almost 40 times faster than standard broadband, it will enable high quality video conferencing, pay and free to air television as well as the emerging video on demand service.

"With more people working from home, bill payments and other transactions increasingly carried out online and the internet such an integral research tool for school children, the fibre optic component at Aurora points to a logical and efficient way forward in new housing.

Minister Thomson said that the broadband being provided at Aurora was the absolute world's best and exactly what Australia should strive for all new housing estates.

"Australians are missing out on this type of service which is becoming common place in Europe, North America and parts of Asia because the Howard Government is failing to establish a broadband vision for Australia."

"Through this project at Aurora, the Bracks Government has created a model that other developers can use as a guide to delivering this great service in other housing estates."

Homes at Aurora come with six months free internet access to 2 megabytes per second (mbps) and capacity to access up to 100mbps and free phone calls within the community network.

They also have the option of being networked to the local school, providing eLearning capabilities. Electronic security surveillance is also an option for all homes.

Wireless hotspots will keep people connected to the internet around the development. At Aurora you can take your work with you and access emails while having a coffee at the local café or park.

The Aurora development will also set national benchmarks for sustainable design, including water recycling, energy efficiency and solar heating.