

Thursday, September 28, 2006

## **ESECURITY CRUCIAL FIRST LINE OF ICT DEFENCE: THOMSON**

Online security is an essential component of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, making collaboration between business, education and government increasingly important, ICT Minister Marsha Thomson said tonight.

“The Bracks Government sees eSecurity as a vital component, not merely a lucrative niche of the online industry,” Ms Thomson said as she announced Victoria’s latest eSecurity cluster.

“That is why this announcement is so important. eSecurity affects every online transaction.

“Every time we conduct business online, use an ATM or even transfer information from one computer to another, we are reliant on some form of security. For these reasons, eSecurity is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the ICT industry, and as it increases in complexity, security must not only keep up with this trend, but stay one step ahead of it,”

The Bracks Government has provided \$100,000 to kickstart this cluster of eSecurity companies and universities. The cluster, known as SECIA – eSecurity Innovation and Awareness - is the latest addition to the State’s existing ICT clusters, all of which play an important role in driving the State’s information economy.

Victoria’s eSecurity companies, universities and research institutes recognised that a coordinated approach was the best way to stay at the forefront of eSecurity technology, and capitalise on the rapidly increasing demand for high-quality eSecurity products and services.

SECIA will give its members the means to collaborate on research and development and draw on respective areas of expertise to improve eSecurity measures.

In addition, by working together companies and the State’s tertiary institutes can deliver curricula that are current, ensuring the State’s ICT graduates have the requisite skills to support the Victoria’s ICT sector.

The international growth of eSecurity products and services is predicted to rise at a substantial rate, and the Government understands that Victoria’s small but innovative eSecurity companies are already competing successfully on the global market.

Victoria’s eSecurity companies are carving out lucrative niche markets by producing high-quality products and services; and identifying gaps in new and traditional markets and filling them,” Ms Thomson said

“By forming collaborative networks, SECIA will provide its individual members with an edge.

“We understand that much business is driven by competition but Victoria’s ICT clusters are proving that entrepreneurial spirit works well within strong collaborative networks. These

relationships drive research and development and managing curricula to ensure a highly-skilled workforce and ultimately opening up gateways to global markets,' said Ms Thomson.

The State's ICT sector's annual revenue is around \$23 billion, with around \$1 billion in exports.

Victoria produces most of the nation's ICT graduates, and the Victorian ICT industry employs over 76,000 people.

Other initiatives through which the Bracks Government supports Victoria's ICT industry include the ICT Trade and Events Export program, the Emerging Markets Strategies program, \$ 1.1 million ICT Scholarships Program; \$370,000 ICT Industry Skills Scholarship Pilot Program; and the \$450,000 Universities Collaboration Pilot Program.

**For further information on Victoria's Innovative Clusters, please visit [www.mmv.vic.gov.au](http://www.mmv.vic.gov.au)**