



# Media Release

## Senator Alan Eggleston

### Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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19 June 2007

#### **FAST AFFORDABLE BROADBAND FOR REGIONAL WA**

Senator for Western Australia, Dr Alan Eggleston, today welcomed the launch of *Australia Connected* which he said will provide a major boost to broadband coverage in regional WA.

Senator Eggleston, who is Chair of the Environment, Communications, Information Technology and Arts Senate Committee, said that under *Australia Connected* fast speeds will be delivered to rural and regional customers at prices comparable to what is being charged in metropolitan areas today.

"The centrepiece of *Australia Connected* is the immediate rollout of a new competitive state of the art broadband network that will extend high speed services to 99 per cent of the population and provide speeds of 12 megabits per second by 2009," the Senator said.

An *Australian Broadband Guarantee* will also ensure Australians living in the most remote or difficult to reach areas – that is, the remaining one per cent – were entitled to a broadband subsidy of \$2750 per household.

"So regardless of whether you are living up north in Wyndham, or down south in Esperance, under *Australia Connected* you will receive multi-channel television and fast downloads," he said.

OPEL, a joint venture between Optus and rural group elders, has made an agreement with the Australian Government to invest over \$900 million of its own funds to significantly upscale this new network.

"Under the OPEL joint venture, 113 new wireless broadband towers and 28 telephone exchanges will be ADSL2+ enabled in WA," he said.

The first *Australia Connected* OPEL broadband network services will be switched on from September 2007.

"This new, super fast network is fully costed, affordable and will be rolled out immediately Australia wide.

"Australia simply cannot wait until 2013 for Labor's broadband plan to be turned on," he said.

Senator Eggleston concluded that he was confident the Australian Government had got the balance right and that this new network would deliver an enormous productivity boost to the rural and regional areas of Western Australia.