



MEDIA RELEASE

Mayors to lead on next generation broadband for SEQ

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The Council of Mayors, South East Queensland (SEQ), today announced its **ConnectSEQ** proposal – a regional next generation broadband network providing 50+ megabits per second (Mbps) to South East Queensland.

ConnectSEQ will seek funding of around \$100 million from the Federal Government's *Connect Australia* program.

ConnectSEQ has been developed in partnership with the 18 councils of the region, four telecommunications companies and consultant Mach Technology.

Council of Mayors (SEQ) Chairman and Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said he was delighted to announce the **ConnectSEQ** partnership with licensed carriers: NextGen Networks, Allegro Networks, PIPE Networks and Qld Rail (QR).

"With the valuable financial assistance from the Federal Government's *Connect Australia* program, **ConnectSEQ** represents an opportunity for local government to take the lead in the provision of a region-wide, open-access fibre-optic and WiMAX network," Cr Newman said.

"**ConnectSEQ** will allow rural and regional shires to receive next generation broadband services, which are faster than in most metropolitan areas of Australia."

"Offering residents and business a broadband network with next generation speeds will help position SEQ at the forefront of the emerging technological age," Cr Newman said.

"If SEQ is to continue to grow as a smart thinking global leader, we need to invest in world-leading multi-media communication infrastructure. This will help position SEQ at the centre of the emerging global economy – from our own homes.

"Time is money - and sitting in traffic, real or virtual - is a waste."

Cr Joy Leishman, Mayor of Caboolture Shire and Chair of the **ConnectSEQ** Taskforce overseeing the proposal, said the project enables all levels of government to work together and attract private sector investment from the deregulated telecommunications market.

"The funding available under *Connect Australia* will play a key role in the provision of critical infrastructure, and the programs focus on rural and regional areas is to be applauded", Cr Leishman said.

“We have been working closely with the Queensland Government to ensure that **ConnectSEQ** links to their *Project Vista*, which will provide broadband capabilities of up to 100 Mbps in the Brisbane Local Government Area.

“South East Queensland is the fastest growing area in Australia. ¹Between 2001 and 2005, 90,000 people moved to SEQ each year, compared with growth in the whole of Victoria (55,000) and NSW (49,000).

“By 2026, we expect almost four million people will live in South East Queensland. This growth has to be supported by first class infrastructure – or it won’t be attractive for new businesses to invest here.

“It really is crucial that, at the very least, we keep up with the rest of the world with broadband technology.

“A 100-fold increase in bandwidths, from typical speeds today, to 50 megabytes would create an environment for the next wave of economic growth.”

The **ConnectSEQ** submission has received endorsement from a number of industry organisations, including the Urban Development Institute of Australia (Qld), Planning Institute of Australia (Qld), Commerce Queensland and the Infrastructure Association of Queensland.

Cr Leishman said that **ConnectSEQ** had also received positive feedback from Queensland Federal MPs and Senators.

“Many MPs and Senators agree on the importance of high speed broadband infrastructure for South East Queensland. We are looking forward to their continued support now that the proposal is on its way to Canberra,” she said.

Applications for the Federal Government’s *Connect Australia* program close on 18 December 2006.

For further information, visit www.councilofmayorsseq.qld.gov.au

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¹ Statistics courtesy of the Queensland Government’s **Planning Information and Forecasting Unit**