High-Speed Broadband for Arnhem Land

Chief Minister Paul Henderson today officially launched a $34 million project to connect some of the most remote communities of the Territory to high-speed broadband.

Mr Henderson said the Northern Territory Government had committed $6.8 million in funding for the project as part of a partnership with Telstra, Rio Tinto and the Northern Land Council.

“"The work to deliver this project and transform communications for the people of the Arnhem region is already underway," Mr Henderson said.

“It will also complement the Government’s Closing the Gap initiatives to address Indigenous disadvantage across a range of areas including business, health and education.

“One of the biggest challenges we face in service delivery and fostering business in our remote communities is overcoming the tyranny of distance.

“Broadband helps us do just that, for example, for business it allows on-line banking, video conferencing and booking.

“In health, we will see remote diagnosis, professional training and support, and in education it opens up the potential for virtual classrooms and e-learning.

“And more basically, it will help attract more professionals and other workers to remote communities as they will be able to communicate with the world in the same way as people in larger centres take for granted.”

The project involves laying 800km of fibre optic cable between Jabiru and Nhulunbuy.

Minister for Information, Communications and Technology Policy, Karl Hampton, congratulated the project partners and stakeholders – Telstra, Rio Tinto Alcan and the Northern Land Council.

“People living communities like Oenpelli, Maningrida, Nhulunbuy and Gapuwiyak may be off the beaten track but they will now be part of the communications superhighway.”

Member for Nhulunbuy Lynne Walker said the project would bring great benefits to her electorate.

“High speed broadband will be a boost for business, and improve the quality of basic services that can be delivered to the region.”

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