Adam Giles  
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

**Connecting Northern Australia**

11 July 2014

Chief Minister Adam Giles and Telstra CEO David Thodey have met in Darwin to discuss how the company can play a strategic role in the development of Northern Australia.

“Like roads and bridges, communications infrastructure is a key enabler of economic development and I know Telstra is committed to playing a significant role in the development of Northern Australia,” Mr Giles said.

“With such an enormous land mass, effective communications technology is critical to keeping the Territory connected both to other parts of Australia and the wider region.

“The ability to link our remote areas is crucial to attracting investment and keeping the Territory competitive in the tech-savvy South East Asian region.

“Telstra has already proven its commitment to connecting the bush by joining the Territory Government in a $5.76 million phone and internet project covering 13 remote communities.

“As a result of the joint project, eight additional communities have access to 3G mobile phone services and six communities have access to ADSL2+ broadband.”

By the end of the month all of the following communities will all be connected to the 3G mobile network: Ampilatwatja, Arlparra, Barrow Creek, Newcastle Waters, Palumpa, Papunya, Peppimenarti, and Mutijulu.

Elliot, Hermannsberg, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Mutijulu and Wadeye have now been connected to ADSL2+ broadband.

“These services have been delivered on time and on budget in some of Australia’s most remote country. Telstra deserves to be congratulated for supporting this initiative,” Mr Giles said.

“This is a huge achievement and an example of what can be done when industry and government work together.

“I hope it’s the start of a fruitful partnership that will allow the Territory to harness the expertise and innovation of Telstra to build a strong and prosperous Northern Australia.”
“The project is a clear example of the Giles Government’s commitment to improving the lives of regional Territorians and I’m sure residents of these 13 communities are making good use of their new-found connectivity.

“Above all, upgrading our telecommunications technology is about making life easier for Territorians as well as creating jobs that give our children a brighter future.

“There are still more communities without full internet and phone services and I look forward to working with Telstra to try and bridge this communications divide into the future.

“The Territory Government is currently planning a series of regional summits about Northern Development to get feedback and ideas from the public about their priorities.

“We hope Telstra will agree to be involved in panel discussions as part of these regional roadshows to provide expert advice on communications challenges and opportunities in the Territory.”

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