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MEDIA RELEASE

Five sites named as test beds for NBN

The Rudd Government yesterday announced five sites to be the test beds for the NBN. The sites include parts of Townsville, in Liberal Peter Lindsay's marginal seat of Herbert, the NSW coastal communities of Minnamurra and Kiama Downs, in Liberal MP Joanna Gash's seat of Gilmore, and an area to the west of Armidale in NSW, in the New England electorate of independent Tony Windsor.

Our understanding is that these locations have been selected for fibre to the premises trials for their geographic diversity to evaluate methods of fibre network design and deployment, and include underground cable installation and overhead delivery from existing power lines.

Regional Economic Development Corporation CEO, Narelle Pearse, sees this initiative as a positive step.

"The good news is that the NBN rollout is eminent, and the important thing for our region is to ensure that we are on the Government's radar for early rollout of the NBN in our region."

"Townsville has always been well positioned as a significant region in Qld, and we need to ensure we are not overlooked. The fact that Townsville has been selected over Mackay does not hinder our case as these sites are test cases around the new technology, and we firmly believe that our economic base and contribution to the Australian economy puts us in a strong position for early rollout".

"We don't just want to be a test case. We want commitment from the Government for NBN funds for the full rollout in our region."

A business case, co funded by the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac Regional Councils, along with REDC, is currently being prepared to be presented to the NBN. This will demonstrate the economic and community needs of the rapidly growing region and how high speed fibre optic connectivity will enhance productivity and quality of life.

This region plays a major role in maintaining Australia's comparatively buoyant economy, providing over 8% of the Nation's GDP with less than 1% of the population. We believe this significant contribution to the economy will be highly dependent on modern infrastructure, from road, rail and water networks, and especially the early delivery of 21st century telecommunications services from the NBN initiative of the Australian government.

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Media Contact

Ashleigh Howland 4953 2655

