



**NICTIA Submission on
regulatory issues associated with the
National Broadband Network**

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The National ICT Industry Alliance, NICTIA, is pleased to have this opportunity to provide input on regulatory issues associated with the National Broadband Network.

NICTIA has membership that represents a wide cross section of the Australian information and communications technology industry. NICTIA provides a 'clearing house' where organisations representing the interests of industry, ICT professionals and public R&D institutions can meet to exchange views and discuss initiatives to advance promotion and development of ICT in Australia.

It is the submission of NICTIA members that a strategic view needs to be taken in respect of the policy and regulatory framework for the National Broadband Network. NICTIA strongly recommends that the Government take the opportunity presented by the broadband infrastructure rollout to ensure that a policy framework is developed which acknowledges that it is the use of that infrastructure - the applications and the services which will be delivered by the infrastructure and the users' literacy of those applications and services – which will drive the fundamental enhancements in how Australians live and work.

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Conroy, is a prominent advocate of the 'dramatic increases in productivity, the possibilities for new life-changing applications in health, education and entertainment, the possibilities for better access to government'¹ which the revolution of broadband the internet economy will deliver.

Speaking at the CeBIT Ausinnovate Conference in Sydney on 20 May 2008, Senator Conroy referred to some of the innovative research and development projects of NICTA (a NICTIA member) and said:

'...innovative use of new technology is a huge part of increased productivity and continued economic growth.

...this Government has a clear vision for harnessing the potential of Australia's digital future.

We are pursuing a coordinated approach to ensure Australians have the infrastructure, confidence, skills and regulatory environment they need.

By doing this we can create a foundation for economic prosperity for the decades to come.

We will have in place a vital platform supporting Australian innovation.

We will have connections and equipment to ensure Australian children have the skills to compete with international peers.

Australian companies will be better placed to attract investment and commercialise their products.

Australia will be positioned as a mainstay export player in the global digital economy.

¹ OECD Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, Korea, on 18 June

NICTIA supports the Minister's vision of a thriving, innovative ICT industry to deliver the promise of the digital economy. NICTIA also supports the development of a coordinated approach to the infrastructure and regulatory environment as referred to by the Minister. This approach aligns with NICTIA's call² for the development of an ICT strategy and policy framework for Australia, the key planks of which are set out in NICTIA's 10 year Strategic Vision for the ICT Sector '*Energising Australian Innovation*'. The 12 key Vision Statement areas are:³

1. **National 10 Year Strategy:** Australia to have a vibrant, innovative and globally competitive ICT industry that strategically plans for the future and underpins future productivity gains in all other sections of the economy.
2. **National Marketing and Branding:** An Australian ICT sector to be well supported by the Australian, State and Territory Governments under a strong national Australian ICT brand, that presents a united front globally and is well known for its innovation and quality ICT services in key international markets.
3. **Innovation:** An Australian ICT industry that is a magnet for private investment to support R&D and commercialisation of technology through large, multi-disciplinary commercial R&D and product realisation centres.
4. **Innovation in Procurement Practices:** Government as a model ICT purchaser of Australian innovation, recognising that as the largest single ICT customer in Australia, its procurement practices have a substantial impact on innovation in the ICT industry and provide reference sites to facilitate global market penetration.
5. **Skills:** An Australian ICT industry with a leading skill base by world standards with the Australian, State and Territory Governments, industry and education providers working collaboratively to improve skills foresighting, skills development and enhance enrolments in ICT courses.
6. **International Opportunities:** Australian technology businesses to have the capacity and necessary government market intelligence and support to readily identify and respond to real international business opportunities and consistently convert these to positive business wins. Australia has a competitive investment environment, benchmarked against global standards, which seeks to promote Australia as an attractive destination for ICT investment.
7. **Collaboration and Global Integration:** Australian ICT SMEs to be competing successfully on the world stage with the capability and necessary expertise available to access markets, attract venture capital and commercialise their technology solutions.
8. **Entrepreneurship:** our ICT entrepreneurs to possess the managerial, technical and marketing skills to develop their businesses, compete for growth capital and move forward on national and international business opportunities.
9. **ICT Infrastructure:** a high speed, affordable national broadband infrastructure and complementary e-security network that puts Australia amongst the leaders in the OECD in terms of its broadband capabilities. Be one of the first nations to gain the benefits from migrating to IPv6.
10. **ICT Literacy:** Australia to become a highly ICT literate and truly technology proficient society that adopts, adapts and confidently embraces and exploits technology to its advantage and on an equitable basis.
11. **ICT Standards and Conduct:** Australia to increase its development and application of open technical and professional standards, at both a national and international level. Trustworthy technology to be increasingly attained by strongly encouraging professionalism and the ethical and principled conduct of ICT practitioners.
12. **Regulatory Policy:** Australia's regulatory policy to be proportionate to need and not to become an impediment to innovation and investment in ICT.

NICTIA submits that the rollout of the National Broadband Network and this initiative of inviting submissions on associated regulatory issues presents the opportunity to develop the strategic co-ordinated approach to the infrastructure and the regulatory environment for the technology platform supporting Australian innovation.

² The list of contributing members to the Strategic Vision is set out in Attachment 1.

³ A summary document of *Energising Australian Innovation* is available at www.nictia.org.au.