

media release

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City groups plug-in to Broadband Forum

As the Federal Government's "Realising Our Broadband Future" Forum approaches this week on 10-11 December, plans for a number of remote free community events are springing up around Australia to encourage more people to join in and contribute. The Forum aims to "map the applications and business models that will thrive in Australia's high speed broadband future" according to the website, and is organised by Minister Conroy and the Department of Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy.

Supported by CivicTEC, this Thursday 10 December a disparate network comprising social media and creative professionals, state and local government, academia and social commentators are organising impromptu free forums in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and other cities to allow input from a wide cross-section of the community who could not attend the Sydney Forum.

In an open video message Senator Kate Lundy, a speaker at the national broadband Forum, said: "We are all thrilled with the number of people who registered to participate in the national forum, however the response has been so strong that we physically don't have room for everyone."

CivicTEC co-founder John Wells said: "The Federal Forum organisers will be streaming video and hosting a feedback wiki so anyone can watch and comment from their desks. However, the city discussion forums is one way that you can experience the full value of the Forum remotely – by gathering with colleagues and other community stakeholders to watch the streamed presentations and then participate in group discussion.

He added: "The blogs and other feedback elicited from these focused discussions will be summarised and provided to the Forum as structured comment through their online tools. We're anticipating that representatives from business, community organisations, health and education, local government and a broad base of community stakeholders who could not attend the Forum may participate and comment through these remote forums.

"This Forum is not about broadband; it's about the ways it can improve the quality of life for all Australians. We're not inviting people to discuss digital pipes, but examples of ways that a faster, improved national network - particularly for disadvantaged regions – can make a real difference for people and communities." Senator Lundy says in the video.

"These remote participation forums will create important additional opportunities for people to come together, to discuss the talking points of the forum, and to contribute to this very important public consultation", Senator Lundy continued. "For example, it's great to see Parramatta City Council taking the initiative with their group consultation."

The Senator added: "All input will play an important part, and I look forward to reporting to the Forum late in the schedule on behalf of the remote participants with some of their ideas."

The city forums are free and open to all. To check for the nearest and register visit www.bbf.civictec.net. Visit the video message from Senator Kate Lundy and guide on how to contribute to the Forum.

More information

- **Realising our Broadband Future Forum:** www.broadbandfuture.gov.au Twitter: #bbfuture
- **Senator Kate Lundy:** www.katelundy.com.au (Video message at www.bit.ly/bbf-how2contribute)
- **CivicTEC** www.civictec.net is a not-for-profit, non-partisan initiative promoting social innovation through programs on digital leadership, digital citizenship and the digital disparity.

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