

17 October 2008

Push for broadband to all new estates

A re-elected ACT Labor Government would work with the land development sector to encourage Fibre-to-Home broadband connections to all new developments, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope announced today.

The Government would also explore the possibility of establishing a *Centre for Creative Enterprise and Cultural Production*, involving Canberra's main post-school educational institutions — the Australian National University, the University of Canberra and the Canberra Institute of Technology, at a cost of \$100,000.

Mr Stanhope said modern communications technology was vital to Canberra's economic development and ACT Labor would work to encourage all developers to provide Fibre-to-Home broadband connections, and to adopt common user trenches for communications cabling to all new residential, commercial and industrial developments.

ACT Labor's economic development and business policy, released today, focuses on innovation, support for skills development and reforms to government purchasing arrangements.

"Encouraging innovation is central to Labor's approach to business development," Mr Stanhope said," Mr Stanhope said.

"To encourage innovation a re-elected ACT Labor Government will work with business and other stakeholders to establish *Innovation Canberra* - to lead, drive and coordinate innovation initiatives between industry, government, research organisations and the tertiary education sector, at a cost of \$300,000 over the term.

"ACT Labor will also work with the *Australian Information Industries Association* through a new *CollabIT* program to link small and medium ICT businesses with larger national and international firms in the sector, at a cost of \$150,000." Mr Stanhope said.

The export sector will be another focus for Labor over the next term.

If re-elected, ACT Labor will support exporters by:

- Undertaking a census of ACT exporters and export intenders to gather strategic information on ACT export capacity and to inform policy and measure the impact of programs and services;
- Working with local tertiary education institutions on a feasibility study to establish a *Confucius Institute* to promote and develop Chinese language, culture and business relationships in partnership with a Chinese university. ACT Labor will also increase its support for the *ACT Honorary Ambassador Program*. The combined cost of these two initiatives is \$309,000 over the next term; and

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- Working with tertiary and other education service providers to grow the market for ACT education export, by providing \$50,000 towards the cost of a business marketing strategy for this important sector.

“Many ACT businesses undertake a significant part of their business selling to the ACT Government,” Mr Stanhope said.

“In listening to the Territory business community we have heard that there are issues with the current arrangements, particularly for small ACT firms.

“To assist these businesses, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will review its procurement policies to assist ACT businesses raise their awareness of Government procurement processes and exercises, including through enhancing the ACT Government procurement website”, Mr Stanhope said.

Finally, ACT Labor will expand the role of the ACT Government’s *Strategic Project Facilitation Group* to take a more proactive role in identifying and assisting major private and public sector capital investment opportunities in the Territory.

Further detail on ACT Labor’s *Economic and Business Development Policy* is available on the Labor website at www.actlabor.com.au.

Statement Ends

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Campaign Media Release 101/08