

Report: Digital future to grow from Grassroots

'Access alone does not equal digital inclusion', new report states

AUSTRALIA November 16, 2011 – Australia's digital future is dependent on grassroots organisations creating 'a fair go for all' online, according to a new report. Released today, the report *A fair go for all in the digital era: Towards a Digital Inclusion Roadmap* offers a plan to ensure that no-one gets left behind as high-speed broadband is rolled out – and warns that access alone is not enough to make Australia a 'digitally-inclusive' nation.

"The challenge for Australia is clear: grassroots organisations cannot idly wait for government to take the lead on digital inclusion," said Huawei Australia Corporate Affairs Director Jeremy Mitchell. "While Australians increasingly have access to high-speed broadband, access alone is not enough – the onus is on community groups to take action and get people to utilise online services."

Compiled by summit facilitator Dr Tim Williams, the report brings together a wide variety of perspectives from not-for-profits, businesses and government emerging from the National Digital Inclusion Summit. The Summit was sponsored by Huawei, Community Sector Banking, and the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) and held in Parliament House earlier this year.

The summit attracted a range of community organisations whose representatives contributed to the discussion on the proactive steps the not-for-profit sector can take to reduce the exclusion felt by many disadvantaged people, which laid the foundations of the report *A fair go for all in the digital era*.

"The not-for-profit sector is central to the cultural, social and economic well-being of Australia. Proactively embracing and shaping the digital future of the nation will greatly enhance the impact of the sector and reach the whole community" added Peter Quarmby, Executive Director of Community Sector Banking.

“Government needs to ensure that targets for online participation can be achieved in an equitable way – everybody needs to be engaged in this process,” said AIIA CEO Suzanne Campbell. “While the South Australian government is leading Australia with specific targets for use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT): by 2014, 40% of business activity is to be online, the very real challenge is to ensure the benefits of broadband reach everyone in the community.”

Speakers at the summit quoted in the report include the Minister for Broadband, Communications, and the Digital Economy Senator Stephen Conroy, and Shadow Minister Malcolm Turnbull, along with a range of attendees who contributed to the report’s findings.

Key recommendations from *A fair go for all in the digital era* include:

- The establishment of a national digital action plan with targets to get all Australians online by 2020.
- A national digital inclusion and information campaign targeting key target groups who may who may face barriers to getting online – such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, older people, people with disabilities, from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and living in rural and remote communities.
- Start a community campaign for organisations or individuals to give one hour to enabling a neighbour, colleague, friend or client to ‘get online’.
- That the Commonwealth, state and local governments work with relevant not-for-profit organisations in the shaping and development of digital inclusion programs.
- The appointment by the federal government of a National Digital Champion drawn from outside politics to help galvanise the campaign for digital participation; and the equivalent at state level.

- That the disposal of ICT equipment by the Commonwealth be diverted to digital inclusion programs.
- That each NFP organisation should appoint its own digital champion focused on the needs of its own client group – and identify the implications of high speed broadband for its own organisation and approach to delivery of services.

-Ends-

About Huawei

Huawei is a leading information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider serving 45 of the world's top 50 telecom operators. In Australia, Huawei employs more than 700 staff and works with all major Australian operators – 50% of Australians already use some sort of Huawei product for their telecommunications needs. Huawei's products and solutions have been deployed in over 100 countries and support the communications needs of one third of the world's population. For more information, please visit: www.huawei.com.au, follow us on Twitter @HuaweiOZ and www.YouTube.com/HuaweiOZ

About Community Sector Banking

Community Sector Banking is Australia's specialist banking service for the not-for-profit sector. Community Sector Banking is a joint venture between Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and 20 not-for-profit organisations including Jobs Australia, Oxfam Australia, Scope and ACOSS. Please go to www.communitysectorbanking.com.au for more information or follow us on twitter @CSBanking

Media Contacts

Luke Coleman, Huawei Media Relations Manager

M: +61 414 728 720

E: Luke.Coleman@huawei.com