

## Broadband can bring a boom to the bush

*New White Paper sees broadband bring re-population, not de-population*

**Australia, 3 February, 2011:** A new White Paper has found that high-speed broadband can bring a boom to the bush, paving the way for re-population instead of de-population in Australia's rural and regional areas. Set to re-shape the telecoms policy debate, *Connecting Communities: The impact of broadband on communities in the UK and its implications for Australia*, offers a compelling new body of evidence on the effects of broadband on society – with broadband found to be key to attracting people back to rural and regional areas.

For the past five years Huawei has been working with BT to deploy the UK's National Broadband Network-equivalent, called the 21CN network. *Connecting Communities* canvasses the experience of broadband users in the UK, finding a wealth of positive effects across rural and remote communities, public services, the environment, aged care, community engagement and even democracy itself.

“What we've found in the UK is that those areas that have high-speed broadband are beginning to attract people back to regional economies,” said the report's author, renowned community regeneration expert Dr Tim Williams (bio below). “It's not de-population, it's re-population. Because you can do a modern job, you can have modern services, you can have the highest quality of life in those areas now that you've got connectivity, we're seeing a recovery of those areas – it's particularly important for the sustainability of regional economies.”

Commissioned by Huawei Australia, the White Paper was independently researched and compiled by Dr Williams. “The White Paper makes it clear that Australia should not just build a network, but a ‘networked society’,” he said. “The lesson from the UK is clear: we cannot measure success by access to broadband – the real goal must be *use by people*. High-speed broadband is too significant to be left to geeks and engineers.”

“This White Paper will move the debate beyond ‘pits and pipes’ to focus on how Australian communities will benefit from broadband use,” said Huawei Australia Government and Public Affairs Director Jeremy Mitchell. “*Connecting Communities* is not about what can be done with high-speed broadband, but offers an insight into what is happening because of high-speed broadband. It offers a vision of what we can do here in Australia.”

**Other key findings from the report include:** (see *Executive Summary, Page 2-3*)

- *In health:* telehealth is saving lives now in remote communities in Scotland.
- *In the care of the elderly:* telecare is now enabling 1.7 million to stay in their communities, lead independent and sociable lives, making huge savings – and strengthening family cohesion.
- *In the environment:* tele-conferencing and related home-working are already reducing emissions and congestion – and supporting greater community involvement.
- *In education:* results improved by two grades and hard to reach kids got switched on – especially if they had access to devices at home and school. Education is being transformed.
- *Older, disabled, the isolated:* all report improved well being from tele-care and greater connectivity, speaking to long-lost friends and family on Skype, getting involved in communities online.
- *Public service efficiencies:* the digitisation of X-rays is saving money and lives; in Wales 22 local authorities and all public services are sharing one network, saving millions and improving quality; NHC Choices (a Facebook for health advice) got 20 million hits in the severe 2010 winter, saving the NHS £44 million; a whole education service has enabled parents to apply for schoolplaces online, reducing costs, and disagreements.
- *Public servants and politicians:* are having to be more responsive, more immediately because of the instantaneous interactivity of fast broadband – and this is empowering people (and different kinds of people) too busy, too private or too remote to go to face to face meetings.

Huawei is working with BT in the UK to deploy the 21CN network, as well as building next-generation broadband networks in Singapore, Malaysia, the UAE, and Brunei. The White Paper is publicly available at [www.huawei.com.au/connectingcommunities](http://www.huawei.com.au/connectingcommunities)

## About Huawei

Huawei is a leading telecoms solutions provider serving 45 of the world's top 50 telecom operators. In Australia, Huawei employs more than 300 staff and works with all major Australian operators – 50% of Australians already use some sort of Huawei product for their telecommunications. 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](http://www.huawei.com.au), follow us on Twitter @HuaweiOZ and [www.youtube.com/HuaweiOZ](http://www.youtube.com/HuaweiOZ)

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## About Dr Tim Williams



Dr Tim Williams, Director of consultancy Publicani, is currently working on projects in both the UK and Australia. Prior to this, Tim was Managing Director for Navigant Consulting Public Services in London where he built a team of 25 working on housing, regeneration, local government and education projects. He is acknowledged as one of the UK's leading urban regeneration specialists. In 2003 Tim was named as the UK's Regeneration Personality of the year. Tim was Chief Executive of the Thames Gateway London Partnership between 1998 and 2003, when the Gateway, Europe's biggest urban regeneration programme, become a national priority.

Tim was special advisor to the Rt Hon David Miliband when he was a Cabinet Minister for the Department for Communities and Local Government. Uniquely, he then advised all subsequent housing and regeneration ministers until June 2010. Having also been a ministerial advisor on regeneration in Wales, Tim remains the only person ever to have been a special advisor for ministers in both England and Wales. He is currently advising the Welsh education minister on the reform of the education system. Tim has also advised the current London Mayor on the new design guide for London, the Chief Executive of the £5billion Homes and Communities Agency which he helped create and the CEO of Lend Lease Europe on the Olympic legacy. He has chaired inquiries for the UK Housing Corporation and the Welsh Assembly government.