

MEDIA STATEMENT



Tony Simpson MLA

Shadow Minister for Forestry; Volunteers; IT & Communications

24 October 2006

Lagging Logan logging on? Forced to adopt ideas of WA Opposition

One thing you can count on the Carpenter Labor Government to do is repel a good idea from the Liberal Opposition – then introduce it months later as though it was an original Labor policy.

WA Minister for Science and Innovation Fran Logan has once again shown his lack of originality by announcing he would examine the development of a government-supported broadband network.

Opposition IT and Communication spokesman Tony Simpson welcomed the news but criticised the Minister for stalling on the decision.

“Two months ago I called on the State Government to invest more in local Internet infrastructure and to upgrade the broadband system to make the state more competitive,” Mr Simpson said.

“Western Australia’s broadband network is inadequate, which was highlighted in a report issued by the Internet Industry Association.

“Australia needs a much faster broadband network to remain competitive and I am glad the Minister has finally caught on.

“Providing world class broadband access would be a good start.

“Hopefully the Minister’s statement over the weekend is not just rhetoric.”

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Industry demands faster Internet speeds

The Internet Industry Association (IIA) says if Australia does not meet its Internet infrastructure targets it will fall behind other world economies.

Shadow IT and Communications Minister Tony Simpson said that Western Australia trailed country New South Wales in meeting the targets, threatening the viability of the State’s Internet infrastructure.

“The Carpenter Labor Government isn’t doing enough for Internet infrastructure in WA and this threatens our success against other developed economies,” Mr Simpson said.

The IIA recommends minimum targets for 80 per cent of the Australian population of 10 megabytes per second with 67 per cent having access to 24mbps or more.

“WA could be left behind the rest of the developed world if we don’t begin to embrace modern broadband technology and download speeds,” Mr Simpson said.

“Country Energy in NSW will soon begin a pilot program to provide broadband Internet over power cables.

“Queanbeyan, near Canberra, provided Internet users download speeds of up to 200mbps in recent trials.

“By comparison, most Australian broadband users utilise ADSL with maximum speeds of 1.5mbps.

“The Carpenter Government should be trying to reach beyond the targets set by the IIA to keep the state competitive.

“It isn’t impossible if rural areas of the east coast are doing it.

“As we move into a future, further dominated by information technologies, it is imperative that WA is at the forefront of the industry.”