



# Media Release

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## Connectivity key to Gippsland business growth

### nbn™ broadband access network predicted to create up to 960 new local businesses by 2021

New research released today reveals the **nbn™** access network is expected to generate up to 960 new businesses and up to 4,170 additional digital jobs in the Gippsland region by 2021.

Commissioned by NBN Co, the Regional Australia Institute compiled the *Gippsland Business Growth Opportunities* report using research from AlphaBeta's first national economic and social study of the impact of the **nbn™** access network.

It highlights how the uptake of the network in Gippsland is set to support the growth of a technologically skilled workforce and drive business innovation in the region.

Gippsland's high concentration of tradesman (15 per cent) and technical skilled workers (27 per cent) indicates the region is in a strong position to leverage digital technologies to start up new businesses, open new market opportunities and reduce reliance on traditional industries.

#### **Jack Archer, Chief Executive Officer for the Regional Australia Institute said:**

"The recent closures of Hazelwood power station and the East Gippsland sawmill means a technologically skilled workforce is necessary to support the region's transition from the energy sector into the services industry.

"Access to fast broadband can encourage new and existing industries within the Gippsland region to become commercially competitive and attract a professional workforce across new industries.

"Innovation and entrepreneurship which can be pursued by embracing digital technology will enable Gippsland to continue to offer the benefits of a regional lifestyle with the attraction of globally competitive business opportunities."

#### **Ebony Aitken, Head of nbn™ local Victoria said:**

"With the rollout of the **nbn™** access network almost complete in Gippsland, the region is in a strong position to take advantage of a fully connected workforce to drive growth and reach new markets.

"It's encouraging to see early signs of growth as a result of connectivity with local businesses taking advantage of access to fast broadband to expand their market and increase productivity."



**Key imperatives recommended for Gippsland from the Regional Australia Institute:**

- **Get connected** – businesses in Gippsland can tap into applications such as cloud computing and video conferencing to reach new markets and compete globally;
- **Build technological knowledge and upskill the workforce** – to fuel business innovation in the form of new products and services, efficiency gains and new ways to connect with customers;
- **Apply the capabilities of digital technologies** – to enable workers to lift existing business performance as well as increase the number of new ones.

The rollout of the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> access network in the Gippsland region is almost complete with more than 145,000 homes and businesses now able to order a service through a phone or internet provider. Construction work to build the network is currently underway for the remaining 5,000 homes and businesses across Eagle Point, Newlands Arm and Mallacoota.

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