



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

22 July 2020

Maximising the benefits of digital connectivity for all Australians

The Morrison Government has today established the Australian Broadband Advisory Council to provide the Government advice on maximising the economic upside of increased digital connectivity for Australian businesses and consumers.

Ms Deena Shiff has been appointed Chair of the Council and will be joined by six other eminent Australians with significant digital, technology and business expertise – Dr Bronte Adams AM, Mr Martin Haese, Mr Scott Lorson, Mr Jan Müller, Ms Georgina Somerset AM and Mr Zareh Nalbandian.

The Council will provide advice to Government on:

- ways the NBN and 5G can boost Australia’s economic output
- opportunities to increase the use of the NBN, 5G and other broadband networks in business
- financial and cultural/behavioural barriers to using the NBN and 5G, and cost effective strategies to reduce such limitations, and
- potential implementation, communication and outreach strategies.

The Council will consider the productivity benefits of 5G technologies as its rollout advances. In doing so, the 5G Working Group previously managed by the Department of Communications will be reconstituted as a sub-group of the Council, to provide advice on 5G as a new broadband platform and possible 5G use cases.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said the Council will be charged with identifying further ways that digital connectivity can be leveraged to support Australia’s economy, including the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Digital connectivity has been at the centre of people’s lives and livelihoods throughout COVID-19, with businesses and consumers rapidly embracing online means for productivity, connectivity and social cohesion. This was underlined by a recent data showing NBN usage soaring up to 70 per cent during work hours, with 83 per cent of Australians crediting the NBN as being vital for doing their jobs,” said Minister Fletcher.

“We are just getting started with the benefits that fast broadband can provide, and Australia is uniquely placed with the NBN as backbone of the nation’s digital economy. Having completed the initial volume build and with the network available to more than 11.7 million homes and business, the NBN is moving into its next phase, and the Broadband Advisory Council will help us to think broadly and boldly about the ways we can maximise the benefits of Australia’s largest infrastructure project and leverage it to drive long-term economic and social benefits across all sectors of the economy.

“I look forward to receiving input from the Council on how to we can leverage the ubiquitous, fast broadband connectivity to stimulate the nation’s productivity, increase opportunities for businesses, and to support social benefits for all Australians.”

More information on the Advisory Council and the Terms of Reference is available at:

<https://www.communications.gov.au/advisorycouncil>

Media contacts:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Further Information

The Council is expected to meet three times per year in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and provide recommendations to the Government. Over time, the Council is expected to also look at productivity benefits of 5G as the rollout gains momentum.

The Digital Technology Taskforce is examining how Australia can become a leading digital economy by 2030 with a focus on promoting productivity gains through the take up of digital technology across the whole Australian economy.