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Minister for Finance

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

THE HON MARK COULTON MP

Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government

PAT CONAGHAN MP

Member for Cowper

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

22 September 2020

Businesses across Australia to get high-speed fibre broadband

Nine in 10 businesses will be able to order high-speed fibre broadband as NBN Co rolls out 240 Business Fibre Zones nationwide.

Under the new initiative announced by the Government in Port Macquarie today, Australian businesses will be able to access premium-grade NBN business fibre services at no upfront build cost to their retail service providers, boosting economic growth in regional and metropolitan Australia.

NBN Co's Business Fibre Initiative is part of a \$700 million package to transform the accessibility and affordability of business-grade fibre and allow small to medium businesses to embrace opportunities for growth.

The initiative will offer wholesale symmetrical speeds from 10 Mbps up to 1 Gbps on-request to more than 700,000 businesses in 240 Business Fibre Zones, including 85 Business Fibre Zones located in regional areas. It will also reduce wholesale pricing by up to 67 per cent for businesses in Zones outside metropolitan centres.

The first 130 Business Fibre Zones have been announced by NBN Co and include locations across the country from Rockhampton in Queensland to Bunbury in the West, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour in New South Wales, Mount Gambier in South Australia and Devonport in Tasmania.

Businesses in these Zones will be eligible to access Enterprise Ethernet, NBN Co's fastest wholesale product, which provides options for prioritised bandwidth, 24/7 dedicated support through NBN's business operations centre, and symmetrical wholesale speeds suitable for data intensive applications such as online collaboration and cloud-based tools.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said the

Government is backing this significant investment into Australia's small and medium businesses, which will be critical to our economic recovery from COVID-19 and to the Government's goal for Australia to be a leading digital economy by 2030.

"During this global health crisis the NBN has proven itself to be a vital national asset. It has supported Australian businesses as they have innovated and adapted to digital operating models to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and enabled families and friends to keep in touch virtually," Minister Fletcher said.

"The Morrison Government understands the importance of continued investment into Australian businesses and digital connectivity. That's why we are making affordable ultra-fast broadband available to more businesses Australia wide."

"For the first time, businesses outside capital city centres within these Business Fibre Zones will have access to CBD zone wholesale prices, driving annual cost savings of between \$1,200 and \$6,000."

Finance Minister Mathias Cormann said the additional investment into NBN Co's Business Fibre Initiative will enable businesses to boost their digital capabilities and create thousands of jobs.

"This Initiative will create more jobs as we combat the impact of COVID-19 on our economy and employment across our country. The construction of the Business Fibre Zones will deliver up to 6,000 new jobs by 2021-22, including more engineers, project managers and construction crew," Minister Cormann said.

"It will also boost the productivity of businesses within each of the 240 Business Fibre Zones. This will include 14 Zones centred around major hospitals, which will help facilitate the formation of globally competitive health precincts.

"By providing businesses and essential health services with dedicated fibre at affordable prices, NBN Co is boosting access to digital productivity tools and providing significant new opportunities for innovation."

Minister for Regional Communications, the Hon Mark Coulton MP, said regional businesses will benefit from the transformation to NBN wholesale business pricing, which will bring regional pricing into line with capital cities.

"Businesses in regional Australia are resilient and innovative; they've met the challenges of COVID-19 by expanding their digital footprint and adapting how they do business and this reduction in costs will further help those in the regions," Minister Coulton said.

"The new Business Fibre Zones will connect regional businesses to staff, patients, suppliers, business partners and customers wherever they're located, putting them on an even playing field with their metropolitan counterparts."

Member for Cowper, Mr Pat Conaghan MP, welcomed Business Fibre Zones being installed in Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour.

"The launch of the Business Fibre Initiative will support business critical applications including cloud storage and online collaboration helping our local businesses stay competitive in the digital age," Mr Conaghan said.

NBN Co will allocate \$50 million to help expand these Business Fibre Zones by co-investing with Local Councils and State Governments.

The Business Fibre Initiative will be funded from part of the \$6.1 billion private debt facilities recently

established by NBN Co and announced in May 2020, as well as company revenue.

More information about the Business Fibre Initiative is available at: nbnco.com.au/businessfibre

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