



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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INFERIOR INTERNET ACCESS COSTS THE HUNTER \$55.4 MILLION

The Howard Government's failure to invest in high quality internet services will this year cost the Hunter \$55.4 million in lost economic opportunities and 628 jobs, according to a new report.

Economic modelling in the Australian Local Government Association/National Economics *2006-07 State of the Regions Report* has found that regions with poor access to telecommunications technology are less productive and that high speed broadband provides the best opportunity for Australia's industries to access global supply chains.

"Newcastle's position as a centre for export excellence makes it vital that high speed broadband be rolled out in our region," Ms Grierson said.

"Businesses need high speed broadband to compete on a state-wide, national and international basis."

"But the Howard Government's inaction has cost us over 50 million dollars and 600 jobs."

"Labor is committed to a world class fibre-to-the node network - the best technology to deliver broadband to all regions."

"The Hunter was recently described by experts as a *telecommunications backwater*."

"Under a Labor Government, the Hunter will be part of a nation-wide high-speed network that will ensure we keep up with the world."

The *State of the Regions Report* found that, nation-wide, the cost to regions across Australia of inferior internet access could cost \$2.7 billion and up to 30,000 jobs in 2006.

"Add the skills crisis and infrastructure constraints, and it is obvious just how much regions are being held back by the failings of the Howard Government."

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