At the 15th meeting of the Online and Communications Council recently held in Canberra, Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments agreed to create a national framework to advance the development and use of broadband.

The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, and attended by state and territory government ministers and the Australian Local Government Association. It laid the foundation to a more forward-looking and progressive approach to broadband policy in Australia. For the first time, all three levels of government agreed to work together to develop a unified vision for broadband in Australia. Council delegates recognised the importance of broadband for economic growth, promoting regional development and improving the way government services are delivered, and the importance of collaborate governments to ensure the greatest benefits for all Australians. It was agreed to pursue a framework including:

- Developing the capability of the National Broadband Network;
- Providing digital content in priority areas, such as health and education;
- Transforming the nature and delivery of key government applications and services;
- Using the National Broadband Network to deliver certain Australian, State, Territory and Local Government services to Indigenous Australians; and
- Streamlining planning process for broadband deployment into greenfield and other developments.

In addition, state and territory ministers resolved to work together to examine options to leverage their future telecommunications procurements to ensure an appropriate competitive structure, to deliver enhanced value for money, and expanded and better quality services. The ministers expressed their strong preference for a solution to be operated by a genuine wholesale provider that is separate from any retail service provider.

The Rudd Government has committed to invest up to $4.7 billion in a National Broadband Network reaching 98% of Australian homes and businesses. A cooperative approach between governments will assist in the effective use and evolution of the network. This framework will help position Australia as a competitive and innovative knowledge-based digital economy, and will focus on practical and achievable strategies to further develop and facilitate the use of broadband.

Redman Solutions was formed to deliver cost-effective, innovative and customer orientated technology based solutions. Our team is made up of highly experienced professionals with diverse qualifications ranging from management consulting to technical implementation for Local Government, including the Northern Midlands Council. Our approach is to work with our clients in a collaborative fashion ensuring at all times that expectations are being met. Our fundamental philosophy is to deliver high quality solutions ensuring the establishment of long term relationships with our clients. Redman Solutions is the Australian distributor for the following solutions:

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Leading Australian provider of enterprise software solutions, TechnologyOne, has enabled Sydney’s Pittwater Council to automate and make available online their processes to provide section 149 certificates and section 603 certificates through its Property and Rating solution. This has streamlined business processes by reducing turn around times from between three to four days, to a matter of minutes. The certificates are typically required by solicitors managing conveyancing for property transactions. The 149 certificates provide zoning and planning information for properties, while section 603 certificates provide details of outstanding rates requiring payment.

Previously, the process for obtaining certificates at Pittwater Council required a person to physically lodge their application in person, or by mail with a cheque. Applications were then manually processed by the customer service and finance departments, before being passed on to the property department where information was compiled and posted back to the applicant.

Using TechnologyOne eCertificates, applicants simply log on to the council’s website, request the certificate, select the information required, receive instant notification of the fee payable (depending on the amount of information required), and make a secure online payment for the service. Once the payment has been authorised, a PDF version of the certificate is emailed to the applicant.

The process has enabled Pittwater Council to deliver a much higher level of customer service, by providing the customer with an instantaneous online solution to their information requirements. More than 39% of certificate applications are now being processed online by Pittwater Council, substantially reducing the administrative burden previously involved and enabling funds to be used for better services and facilities for rate payers.

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Information Resource Provides Online Benchmark Reports

Councils interested in accessing up-to-date information about Tasmania Together and the state’s progress in meeting relevant benchmarks are now able to do so, following the launch of a new online resource.

Visitors can now access Online Benchmark Reports about Tasmania Together’s 12 goals and the 143 benchmark indicators that measure Tasmania’s economic, social and environmental progress, via one central point.

Visitors to the site can quickly and easily access specific information, such as the proportion of people participating in Local Government elections, the percentage of councils with youth advisory committees and civics, and citizenship. A major benefit of the system is that it will allow for more timely reporting of all indicators. The site will essentially provide an efficient, central repository for a range of important statistics and benchmarks that will be updated regularly to measure Tasmania’s progress towards various goals. It will also provide relevant commentary on these achievements.

The system is designed to enable the user to generate a range of reports about Tasmania Together benchmarks and to choose the level of complexity for each report. It will be of benefit to people interested in specific benchmarks, as it will provide detailed information about how the benchmark is defined, the baseline used to set targets and progress to date.

Tasmania Together is designed to help shape government policy, service delivery and budgets into the future, and to provide information to assist decision-making on issues of concern to the Tasmanian community. From a Local Government perspective, goal eight, which aims for open and accountable government that listens and plans for a shared future, will be of obvious interest to councils, both elected representatives and their officers.

Online Benchmark Reports are available at www.ttbenchmarks.com.au.

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