



Michael Aird, MLC
Treasurer
Friday, 21 December 2007

Government Chooses Aurora as Broadband Partner

The Treasurer, Michael Aird, today announced that the Government had selected Aurora Energy Pty Ltd as its preferred Strategic Alliance Partner to commercialise the Government's on-island optic fibre network (TasGovNet).

"Aurora has already invested in local fibre networks of its own so it can start using the Government's fibre backbone straight away to deliver services in Tasmania," Mr Aird said.

"The first winners are likely to be major businesses that need serious bandwidth between their branch offices, with consumer broadband supported by Aurora's network likely to follow later next year.

"Aurora has extensive plans for the on-island network.

"It will use its own resources, together with the Government fibre, to deliver high and very high capacity broadband services which are currently not available in Tasmania.

"This will open up tremendous opportunities for small and large local businesses as well as pulling in new internet, telephony and computing services providers.

"This will bring Tasmanians closer together by promoting collaboration and communication between the North, South and Northwest.

"This will have immense flow-on effects across our economy and society."

Mr Aird said he expected that negotiations with the new owners of the Basslink cable, CitySpring, would continue in the new year.

"This is not about recouping the Government's investment in its optic fibre cable," Mr Aird said.

"This is about Tasmania being part of the broadband revolution.

Mr Aird also said the move would position the State to benefit from Commonwealth Government projects.

"This will ensure that Tasmania gets maximum benefit from the broadband initiatives planned by the new Commonwealth Government," he said.

“With this arrangement in place, Tasmania can be an early participant in the new broadband education initiative, and will work closely with Optus and Elders to maximise the OPEL roll-out in Tasmania.

“The Government also welcomes the fourth undersea cable to be installed by Optus as part of the Commonwealth supported OPEL project because this will further promote the competition in Tasmania.”

As well as selling commercial services, Aurora will deliver bandwidth to the Tasmanian Research and Education Network, connecting Tasmanian higher education and research providers to each other and the rest of the world.

Mr Aird thanked all participants in the Government’s selection process for their interest in Tasmania and hoped that they would continue to see opportunities in the Tasmanian telecommunications market.

The announcement of Aurora as the Government’s preferred Strategic Partner remains subject to contractual details that will be finalised early in the new year.

Further information: Tasmanian Government Communications Unit

Phone: (03) 6233 6573