

## **Southern Cross University to lobby for broadband on North Coast**

Federal Member for Page, Janelle Saffin, will champion a Southern Cross University submission to get the Australian Government's \$43-billion National Broadband Network (NBN) rolled out early to the NSW North Coast.



Southern Cross University's Professor of Information Technology and Information Systems, Professor Peter Croll, today handed the submission to Ms Saffin during a ceremony at the Student Services Centre, at the Lismore campus.

NSW Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Lands, Tony Kelly MLC, who was in the region for a series of infrastructure funding announcements, also attended to receive a briefing from Professor Croll.

The submission was simultaneously electronically lodged for assessment with NBN's government relations and external affairs chief Mike Kaiser and with Federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy.

Professor Croll said Southern Cross University was committed to the NBN with the construction of a state-of-the-art research and demonstration 'broadband hub' as part of a \$10-million upgrade of facilities at its Coffs Harbour campus.

The Australian Government had allocated \$5 million for rural NBN co-ordinators and the submission advocated that one of these positions should be based at this hub, Professor Croll said.

The submission showcases a number of case studies in E-Health, E-Learning, E-Environmental Management, E-Manufacturing, E-Creative Industries, E-Agribusiness, E-Finance, E-Tourism and E-Local Government (to include emergency management).

Ms Saffin praised the University and its Regional Futures Institute for pulling together a compelling and well researched case for Australia's eastern regional corridor – from Tweed Shire to the Great Lakes district south of Port Macquarie – to be among the first communities in mainland Australia to capitalise on the benefits of high-speed fibre broadband.

"They have achieved this within a very short time frame since I arranged for Minister Conroy to visit Grafton late last year for a broadband forum, where he encouraged our region to put its best foot forward," she said.

"The submission, a collaborative effort involving 14 local councils and businesses at the cutting edge of IT, underlines that we live in a region which has demonstrated early wins though increased productivity and creative innovations. We also boast a combined population of 550,000 people with growth rates on a par with our capital cities."

Ms Saffin paid tribute to Coffs Harbour Mayor Cr Keith Rhoades and his Economic Development Unit officers Kristina Cooke and Barry Davis, Tweed Shire Council's Director of Technology and Corporate Services Troy Green, Tweed Economic Development Unit

CEO Tom Senti and Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils (NOROC) chair and Lismore Mayor Cr Jenny Dowell, for helping to drive the project.

The submission can be viewed at [www.gobroadband.org.au](http://www.gobroadband.org.au) a website developed by Southern Cross University information technology lecturer Dr Bill Smart. The site has already attracted more than 1600 hits from local businesses and residents interested in the NBN push.

**Photo: Professor Peter Croll, who today handed the University's National Broadband Network submission to member for Page, Janelle Saffin.**

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