Remote Australia: information super highway or dusty road?

With broadband communications underpinning everything – education, employment, health, government services, social lives, tourism, commerce, exporting and importing – future sustainability relies heavily on access to effective telecommunications. As Australia builds its information super highway with the roll-out of the National Broadband Network, will remote Australia get left behind?

"There is a digital divide between the city and remote Australia that the NBN Co alone will not address. This existing divide could actually widen unless the unique needs of remote Australia are addressed," says John Huigen, Chair of the Broadband for the Bush Alliance and CEO of Desert Knowledge Australia.

This issue will be addressed at the third *Broadband for the Bush Forum: Building a Better Digital Future,* to be held in Alice Springs on 30 April and 1 May. The two day dynamic program will enable the active engagement of remote and rural stakeholders with key decision makers to build collaboration and deliver the best possible policy outcomes.

According to the Broadband for the Bush Alliance, "there is no single model or solution to get the best outcome across remote Australia. Applying a one-size-fits-all solution will not work. Alternative strategies are needed to deliver high quality broadband in remote Australia."

The Forum is structured to deeply address four themes: Digital Inclusion, Technology & Policy, Digital Economy and Digital Services. The Forum will feature more than 30 speakers who are nationally acknowledged experts in their field including Forum moderator Rosemary Sinclair, CEO of Immediate Solutions and Member of the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

The Forum is organised as part of the Broadband for the Bush Alliance, a group of organisations that are committed to the digital inclusion of remote and rural Australia.

Facilitated by *Desert Knowledge Australia*, the Alliance aims to ensure that remote and rural Australia does not become further disadvantaged in the area of communications and does not risk missing opportunities for economic and social development. The Alliance seeks practical outcomes that promote digital inclusion, using both fixed and mobile technologies and brings together a range of remote and rural stakeholders with expertise in communications, remote service delivery, and community engagement.

A full program, including how to register is available at www.broadbandforthebush.com.au

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