

**Tuesday 28 July 2009**

**PR/122/09**

### **Farmers vote in support of telephone exchange upgrades**

Access to adequate telecommunications for rural and regional residents is on the agenda at today's NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference, with Delegates voting in support of telephone exchange upgrades.

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Sarah Thompson says delegates have asked the Association to lobby for the upgrade of telephone exchanges that have been excluded from the Federal Government's National Broadband Network (NBN).

"Under the National Broadband Network, the Government is aiming to connect 90 per cent of homes and workplaces in Australia to a fibre broadband network, guaranteeing services of 100mbps," Ms Thompson said.

"While this is great news for the majority of Australians, our concern is that the 10 per cent who miss out are those who live in areas with smaller populations, including the many towns in rural and regional NSW with populations of less than 1,000.

"The Association believes quality, affordable and equitable telecommunications should be available to all, regardless of location. We believe people in rural, regional and remote Australia should have access to the same standard of telecommunication capabilities as all other Australians.

"Which is why Delegates have today voted to lobby for the upgrade of telephone exchanges in areas that would have otherwise missed out under the NBN.

"The upgrading of telephone exchanges with broadband capabilities is essential to provide local communities with the ability to access the higher speeds and services as they become available under the NBN," Ms Thompson said.

Today is the first day of the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference in Sydney. Farmers from across the State have travelled a combined total of 140,192kms to be in attendance.

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