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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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SMARTFarm and QuickSmart demonstrate the possibilities of the NBN

Progress on two new initiatives in Armidale that demonstrate the incredible potential of the National Broadband Network (NBN) have been viewed by The Minister for Broadband, Communications & the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy and the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Minister Conroy visited the University of New England to view the SMARTFarm initiative and discuss the QuickSmart program, at the invitation of Mr Windsor.

Mr Windsor is pleased that Minister Conroy has made the effort to visit Armidale.

“Having been chosen as one of the first towns in mainland Australia to be connected to the NBN, Armidale is already at the forefront of telecommunications.

“Minister Conroy’s visit is a reflection of the extraordinary opportunities available to local people thanks to the NBN.

“Even though the NBN is in its infancy, programs like SMARTFarm and QuickSmart are proof that local people have grasped this opportunity and are running with it.”

SMARTFarm uses sensors and video/audio connectivity through the NBN to monitor on-farm data, including stock movements and soil moisture. It will serve as an educational resource for teachers from primary school through to university, with particular benefit for those studying agriculture and environmental sciences. SMARTFarm is also a platform to teach the wider agricultural industry about the potential of NBN-enabled technologies to improve farm productivity and resilience.

QuickSmart is an online learning tool that offers students a second chance at gaining numeracy and literacy skills. Already used by nearly 10,000 school students, QuickSmart will be extended to job seekers throughout Australia via an NBN program funded by the Commonwealth. It’s expected to be of particular use to indigenous job seekers in remote communities, mining industry trainees in Australia’s top end, and inmates in jail.

Mr Windsor says these new initiatives demonstrate the widespread opportunities of the NBN.

“SMARTFarm and QuickSmart use the platform of the NBN to achieve very different goals.

“SMARTFarm has the potential to help Australian farmers make the next great leap in productivity.

“QuickSmart has the potential to prevent thousands of Australians who are struggling to gain basic numeracy and literacy skills from falling through the cracks.

“I’d like to congratulate the University of New England and its partners for their innovative thinking in pioneering these new concepts,” Mr Windsor concluded.

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