

Super-fast internet offered to SA businesses, backed by state budget funding

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Internet speeds many times faster than the National Broadband Network (NBN) will be made available to businesses in South Australia.

Commercial access will be allowed to an optical fibre network that, until now, has been used exclusively by universities, the Defence department and some schools.

The South Australian Government is pledging nearly \$5 million to give businesses access to SABRENet — a research and education network which processes data many times faster than the NBN.

"We think that that's very exciting for SA businesses, especially those small businesses that would otherwise be locked out of actually putting their hand up for this high-speed internet," Premier Jay Weatherill said.

SABREnet is currently used at 160 sites across South Australia, but now businesses will be able to plug in and develop higher speed online networks, SABRENet chief executive Ralph Leonard explained.

"This project is now opening it up specifically in the innovation precincts, the smaller companies that currently have more difficulty getting very high speed networks," he said.

Technology business welcomes faster internet

For Adelaide technology business Codan, being first to the market is a key to global competitiveness and it said having access to the local optical fibre network SABRENet would improve its online capacity.

Codan chief executive Donald McGurk welcomed access to higher speeds.

"That is going to be the same challenge that is faced by most [businesses] that are trying to become globally relevant and trying to do start-ups and become technology leaders out of South Australia," he said.

Premier Weatherill said there would be exciting times ahead.

"Smart businesses will find new ways of actually using up that speed. That will create the new businesses and the new jobs of the future," the Premier said.

Mr Weatherill said the funding, as part of the state budget to be unveiled next week, would help make SA a leader in innovation.

Faster internet would boost world-class research being done at the Tonsley Innovation Precinct in southern Adelaide, Flinders University said.

"Faster broadband is absolutely essential for the development and expansion of innovation and economic growth, making this very good news for Flinders' research and collaboration here at Tonsley," the university's Dean of Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics, Professor John Roddick, said.

Commercial SABRENet connections could become available within months.