



# Media release

## **The Hon Dr Denis Naphthine MP**

Premier  
Minister for Regional Cities  
Minister for Racing

## **The Hon Peter Ryan MP**

Deputy Premier  
Minister for State Development  
Minister for Regional and Rural  
Development

Friday 14 March 2014

## **New free Wi-Fi initiative expands to central Bendigo**

- **Free public Wi-Fi for central Bendigo**
- **Building a Better Victoria by providing fast, reliable and consistent Wi-Fi service**
- **Free Wi-Fi access for locals, tourists, students and small businesses**

Premier Denis Naphthine and Deputy Premier Peter Ryan today announced Expressions of Interests (EOIs) to deliver free Public Wi-Fi in central Bendigo.

Addressing the Bendigo Business Council Luncheon, Dr Naphthine said the free public Wi-Fi initiative would expand broadband connectivity to central Bendigo, and provide significant benefits to the local community, businesses and tourists.

“The initiative aims to pilot fast, reliable and free Wi-Fi services in central Bendigo, in and around publicly owned infrastructure, including public transport hubs and tourist attractions for the next three to five years,” Dr Naphthine said.

Dr Naphthine said providing widespread free public Wi-Fi was part of the Victorian Coalition Government’s commitment to building a better Victoria.

“We are encouraging innovative EOIs that will ensure a reliable, sustainable, free service that is also filtered for prohibited and undesirable content,” Dr Naphthine said.

“All responses will be assessed on their commercial viability with strong preference given to proposals where there is no ongoing cost to government, beyond any potential initial investment to establish the infrastructure.

“Government investment could include direct grants or in-kind contributions like advertising, sponsorship and priority access to public infrastructure and facilities.”

Deputy Premier Peter Ryan said the announcement was a great opportunity to integrate free Wi-Fi into Victoria's regional centres.

“The Public Wi-Fi initiative is a key outcome of the Coalition Government’s ICT Strategy to improve public sector service delivery and boost small to medium business productivity,” Mr Ryan said.

“Locals and tourists visiting Bendigo will soon have a consistent Wi-Fi experience enabling them to share their experiences of regional Victoria including local tourist hubs with family and friends around the world.

.../2

“Providing strategic Wi-Fi hotspots across central Melbourne, central Bendigo and central Ballarat will encourage community uptake of digital technologies and the development of new applications will see huge benefits in rolling out more public Wi-Fi networks across the state,” Mr Ryan said.

EOIs are open until Thursday 17 April 2014 with contracts expected to be awarded by midyear.

**Media contacts:**

---

<b>Martin Barr</b>	<b>0418 101 127</b>	<a href="mailto:martin.barr@minstaff.vic.gov.au">martin.barr@minstaff.vic.gov.au</a>	<b>(Premier)</b>
<b>Les White</b>	<b>0409 805 122</b>	<a href="mailto:les.white@minstaff.vic.gov.au">les.white@minstaff.vic.gov.au</a>	<b>(Deputy Premier)</b>