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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release

### **Basslink Telecoms officially launches commercial services**

Basslink has officially launched the commercialisation of the Basslink Telecoms business in George Town, Tasmania today.

The news follows last week's announcement that Basslink carried its first commercial service on the fibre optic cables contained within the subsea electricity interconnector.

Basslink CEO Malcolm Eccles said "Today is an historic day for Basslink and for Tasmania.

"As owners and operators of Basslink, we are proud to be marking the official launch of the Basslink Telecoms service and the onset of backhaul broadband competition into Tasmania.

"It has taken a huge effort from all parties involved to get the fibre optic component of the interconnector activated and operational. Today provides great cause for celebration," he said.

"Now operational, Basslink Telecoms brings increased competition to Tasmanian broadband telecommunications.

"For the first time, Tasmanians – through their ISP's – will be able to choose a provider to carry high bandwidth telecommunications across the fibre link between Tasmania and the mainland. The new network brings infrastructure-based competition in backhaul to Tasmanian businesses and households, giving much greater access to high capacity broadband services.

Mr Eccles said he was confident that increasing competition on the route will generate competitive backhaul prices, and as the market becomes more competitive, users of broadband will see costs reduce, and performance improve.

"The network also provides a substantial boost to Tasmanian-based providers of value-added services such as content development and applications development", he said.

Today's launch was also attended by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy and Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett.

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Senator Conroy said today's announcement marked a major milestone in Australian telecommunications history.

"The commercialisation of Basslink will drive competition in the 'backhaul' route and open up opportunities for competitive internet service providers to enter the Tasmanian market," he said.

Tasmanian Premier, David Bartlett said this was a momentous occasion for Tasmania.

"Five years ago the State Government had the foresight to invest in a fibre optic spine across Tasmania. It is now providing the backbone for a telecommunications transformation, supporting innovation, new ideas and better service delivery across our state in the years ahead," he said.

"The fast and efficient movement of information will be to 21<sup>st</sup> century Tasmania what the dams, poles and wires of the Hydro were to the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

Mr Eccles said that today's celebration further highlights the significance of the Basslink interconnector as one of Tasmania's key infrastructure assets.

"Not only does Basslink provide security of energy supply, it now unlocks a previous monopoly for backhaul broadband traffic between Tasmania and the mainland.

"The electricity interconnector's performance is among the best in the world, and we look forward to demonstrating the same best practice for our telecommunications service.

"We are long-term investors in Australia through our parent CitySpring, and we are very pleased to be in a position to deliver a vital new service to serve the Tasmanian community and economy. Basslink will continue to strive to deliver the best possible services for the Tasmanian community.

"It has been a major investment on Basslink's behalf to enable the interconnector to carry high bandwidth telecommunications traffic. We are looking forward to working closely with Aurora and the Tasmanian Government in the coming years and beyond, as backhaul competition becomes a reality", said Mr Eccles.

Basslink CEO acknowledged the efforts of principal supplier Ericsson, who have worked with Basslink to activate the fibre optic capacity and created a dependable platform.

Ericsson Australia and NZ CEO, Jacque Hey, further highlighted the reliability of the new network.

"Basslink's service is one of the world's longest unamplified optical backhaul solutions, using Ericsson's advanced optical technology to cover its 290km underwater length. Upgradability also ensures that Basslink has the capacity to meet future demand."

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**For further information about Basslink, please contact:**

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**About Basslink [www.basslink.com.au](http://www.basslink.com.au)**

Basslink is an historic Australian project that enables the trade of electricity between Tasmania and the mainland, providing secure, renewable energy and telecommunications services. The Basslink interconnector runs from Loy Yang in Gippsland, Victoria, across Bass Strait to Bell Bay in northern Tasmania. The 360km Basslink interconnector incorporates the longest submarine power cable in the world. Basslink has the capacity to export up to a maximum of 594 MW of power from Tasmania to Victoria, and import of 478 MW to Tasmania, with a continuous rating of 478 MW in each direction. Singapore-based CitySpring Infrastructure Trust is the owner and operator of Basslink. The interconnector is a \$780 million project and one of the largest infrastructure projects of its type ever undertaken in Australia. Basslink continues to provide Tasmania with enhanced security of electricity supply and is working to drought-proof the state.