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# Australia's Communications Future Forum

Sydney

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Voice of Australian farmers

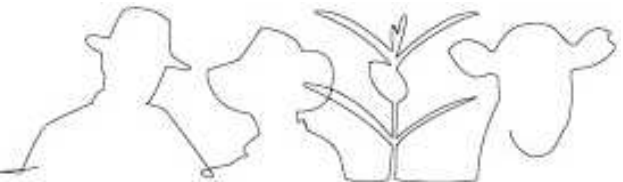


# A Rural Perspective

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- Innovation in Information and Communication Technology is of paramount importance to Rural Australia and to the benefits that an efficient, international competitive primary industry sector bring to the Australian economy
- The social objective of equitable telecommunications services for all Australians
- Commercial investment in a competitive environment is essential to the development of sustainable “broadband for the bush” and of preference to subsidised solutions



# A Rural Perspective

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- The challenge to ensure sustainable and equitable telecommunications service access outcomes by balancing the equally important objectives of competition and investment by telecommunications providers.
- The development of telecommunications infrastructure that is at the upper end of global broadband capacity trends, that is affordable and accessible to metropolitan and regional Australia.



# Australian Agriculture

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- There are approximately 130,000 commercial farms in Australia
- They utilising approximately 58 per cent of Australia's land mass
- For 2007-08, projected Gross Value of Farm Production is \$40.084 billion
- In 2005-06, the agricultural sector contributed 3 per cent of Australia's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$922.4 billion
- Employment for Farm, Forest and Fisheries (including services) for 2005-06 was 355,000



## Farm, Forest and Fisheries Exports

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- In 2007-08, Farm, Forest and Fisheries exports are projected to be \$29.966 billion
- In 2005-06, exports account for approximately 65 per cent of Australia's agricultural production volume and 75 per cent of value
- The share of agricultural production exported ranges from 98 per cent of wool production to 51 per cent of milk production
- In 2005-06 Farm, Forest and Fisheries product exports accounted for 20% of merchandise exports and 16% of goods and services exports



# Agriculture Productivity

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- Over the last 20 years, Australian farms have consistently achieved average multifactor productivity growth of 3.8% a year.
- No other industry, with the exception of information technology and telecommunications, comes close to this achievement.

————— Voice of Australian farmers —————



# Drought

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- Severe drought across southern and central Australia is projected to reduce farm incomes in 2006-07 to their lowest level in over thirty years
- Estimated to take 0.75% off GDP. Downstream impacts.
- In 2006-07, broadacre farm cash receipts are projected to fall by nearly 20%.
- Winter grain production was down by 60% on last year, the lowest in over ten years
- Impact on livestock de-stocking.

