

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 667**  
**Asked on 9 May 2006**

MRS SULLIVAN asked the Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs (MR CUMMINS) —

**QUESTION:**

What has his department done to help small businesses through improved access to broadband services in the Pumicestone Electorate?

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for her question and congratulate her on her continued support for the ICT industry in her electorate.

Although telecommunications, and specifically the provision of Broadband Services, are a Federal Government responsibility, since 1998 the Beattie Government has established a number of aggregated demand arrangements to improve competition and the availability of telecommunications services across Queensland and has undertaken a number of initiatives to leverage its spending on telecommunications services with the following outcomes:

- Reef Network is 1,820km of fibre optic cable between Brisbane and Cairns. This reduced broadband charges on the Eastern Seaboard by up to 70%.
- The SmartNet project uses aggregated telecommunications expenditure as leverage to develop and deploy cost effective broadband telecommunications through Queensland.
- Under SmartNet, broadband infrastructure has been installed into 30 regional towns and fibre optic cable infrastructure into the business districts of Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton.
- Under SmartNet, Queensland businesses will have access to cheaper business grade broadband services.

The expanded broadband services location includes Ayr, Beaudesert, Beenleigh, Bundaberg, Caboolture, Caloundra, Cairns, Cleveland, Emerald, Gladstone, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Innisfail, Ipswich, Kingaroy, Mackay North, Mareeba, Maroochydore, Maryborough, Mt Isa, Noosa, Redcliffe, Rockhampton, Roma, Southport, Strathpine, Surfers Paradise, Toowoomba, Townsville, Warwick and Yeppoon.

As well as these initiatives to advance broadband development in the Pumicestone region, State Development Centre Caboolture is working to facilitate the formation of a business cluster with a focus on the delivery and uptake of broadband opportunities for businesses in the Caboolture region. The proposed cluster would provide a commercial package, particularly to developers, for the provision of broadband within future developments in the region. The proposal has attracted strong positive interest from a local high-end broadband provider and a local broadband infrastructure contractor.

The Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation is currently examining options for accessing additional funding from the Commonwealth Government under its \$1.1 billion Connect Australia fund to finance the further development of strategic broadband infrastructure and services within Queensland. The Commonwealth is yet to issue the guidelines for the fund.