

Report: comms access, e-government strength makes ANZ ripe for innovation

Widespread access to communications technologies, deep internet penetration and strong government engagement online are enabling a stronger environment for innovation in Australia and New Zealand than in many other countries. But that potential is not yet being fully realised in terms of high-tech and communications exports.

That's one of the messages from the Global Innovation Index, produced by the INSEAD business school in tandem with Alcatel-Lucent as one of its knowledge partners. Amongst a wealth of other metrics, the GII measured 125 world economies on their ICT inputs - whether they created the environment for innovation - and contrasted those with their actual achievements in innovation, or outputs.

On the input side, Australia ranked eighth for ICT use, measured by overall internet penetration, fixed broadband penetration and mobile broadband penetration; New Zealand came in 14th. Australia took 24th place for ICT access, which ranked economies on the number of fixed telephony and mobile penetration, along with bandwidth per user and proportion of households with computers and broadband internet, while New Zealand sat in 22nd.

Australia also earned some respectable results in the ICT-related input categories, ranking second in e-participation - judged on the provision of information by governments to citizens, e-consultation and e-decision making - and fifth in the government online service category, based on governments' online service developments in terms of emerging and enhanced information services, transaction services and demonstrating a connected approach. New Zealand also performed strongly, coming in fourth and fifteenth respectively.

However, the results for ICT-related outputs - both scientific and creative - were less favourable. Australia ranked 56th in high-tech exports, and 76th in computer and communications service exports, while New Zealand managed 59th and 84th respectively.

Petroc Wilton and David Edwards

AAPT to build on NBN aggregator role

AAPT has officially confirmed its status as a network-certified NBN aggregator, ending months of negotiations and extensive lab testing.

AAPT is one of 12 companies signed up to deliver services over the new network. The provider will roll out its trials across NBN first release sites, including parts of Melbourne suburb Brunswick and Queensland's Townsville, coastal communities south of Wollongong, Willunga in South Australia, and Armidale's University of New England and nearby areas.

An AAPT statement said the company's ability to support more than 350 DSL exchanges, 180 Mid-Band enabled exchanges and fibre to approximately 1300 buildings in metropolitan areas would see it well positioned to support its customers during the NBN rollout.

AAPT CEO David Yuile added that AAPT was looking to leverage its position within the NBN by expanding further into converged communications and cloud solutions, boosting its existing product portfolio.

David Edwards

Optus seals A\$1.2 billion credit deal with int'l banks

Optus has inked a A\$1.2 billion committed revolving credit facility agreement with a dozen international banks, with a view to refinancing existing facilities and general corporate expenditure.

The three year deal is part of a larger announcement by parent company SingTel that its subsidiaries, including Optus, have entered into agreements for total credit facilities worth some S\$3.7 billion over three years.

Optus' committed revolving facility agreement is with ANZ, Bank of America, N.A., Barclays Bank PLC, The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd., BNP Paribas, Citibank, N.A., Sydney Branch, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Sydney Branch, JP Mor-