



The Hon. Andrew Stoner MP

Deputy Premier of NSW

Minister for Trade and Investment

Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 5am Wednesday 22 February 2012

COFFS HARBOUR HOSTS INDUSTRY ACTION PLAN FORUMS

Regional business leaders will attend industry forums in Coffs Harbour today to discuss opportunities to promote growth of the region's digital economy and manufacturing sectors.

NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Stoner said the Coffs Harbour forums are among a number of regional forums being organised by NSW Trade & Investment to inform development of Statewide Industry Action Plans.

"Regional business growth is an essential factor in support of the NSW Government's commitment to rebuild the State's economy," Mr Stoner said.

"The NSW Government has established industry led taskforces to develop Industry Action Plans to position key sectors for strong growth over the next 10 years.

"Coffs Harbour is a diverse major centre which generated a gross regional product of about \$2.9 billion in 2010/11 across a range of sectors.

"Today's forums will allow industry leaders from the NSW Government's Digital Economy and Manufacturing Taskforces to take soundings from regional stakeholders including small business owners and managers, local councils and organisations, and TAFE."

Member for Coffs Harbour Andrew Fraser said the NSW Digital Economy Industry Action Plan will provide a strategic long-term vision and roadmap for the State's digital economy, including regional perspectives, to identify and harness future growth opportunities while addressing identified challenges.

"The development of an innovation-driven digital economy has the potential to transform existing industries, drive efficiency and productivity, and create new opportunities for regional businesses," Mr Fraser said.

"The Digital Economy Industry Taskforce is seeking input to recommendations that outline the approaches both industry and Government can take to increase the competitiveness of the sector as well as uptake of digital technologies and applications across the economy."

Mr Stoner said the NSW Manufacturing Industry Action Plan will outline objectives that the manufacturing industry and Government aim to achieve over the next 2, 5 and 10 years.

"NSW's manufacturing sector generated \$32.8 billion, or 10 per cent, of our State economy in 2010 and represents almost 7 per cent of Coffs Harbour's regional economy," Mr Stoner said.

"But the fact is the Australian manufacturing sector is doing it tough given a range of issues including a strained global economic outlook, high Australian dollar, and strong competition from low cost centres like China and India.

"The NSW Manufacturing Industry Action Plan will aim to provide recommendations to help support a broad-based manufacturing sector that is highly competitive, has a flexible and highly skilled workforce, has a strong emphasis on innovation and collaboration, is responsive to environmental challenges, and is attractive to investors," Mr Stoner said.

Further background on NSW's Industry Action Plans can be found at www.business.nsw.gov.au