



Michael Kearns Border Express Senior Developer	Stephen Hogg Border Express CFO	Geoff Luff Border Express Director - Linehaul	Sue Passmore Telstra Countrywide Executive Director - East Region	David Thodey Telstra CEO	Grant Luff Border Express Managing Director	Andrew Cottrill Telstra Countrywide Area General Manager	Jeff Quinn Border Express IT Manager	Manuel Gonzalez Telstra Countrywide Business Solutions Manager
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● Andrew Cottrill and David Thodey are excited about the new fast-speed internet. Picture: PETER MERKESTEYN

Border internet speed to double

BY HOWARD JONES

TELSTRA will double the speed available to Albury-Wodonga customers on its Next G wireless broadband network.

It means people in the twin cities will be able to download files or surf the internet twice as fast as those using the next-fastest 3G modem.

Telstra chief executive David Thodey announced the move in Albury yesterday but said it would require each customer to buy a special USB dongle at a cost of several hundred dollars.

This could be done as part of a two-year plan with Telstra.

Albury-Wodonga is one of 100

centres in regional and rural Australia to benefit, though it is likely the Border service, tipped to start in September or October, will be confined to the city areas for now.

Meanwhile, Telstra is seeking to improve its facilities serving Jindera, subject to council approval.

Mr Thodey was in Albury with Telstra Country Wide group managing director Brett Riley and Riverina-Murray area manager Andrew Cottrill to celebrate 10 years of the organisation.

All three were enthusiastic about the fast service and about new devices such as the Telstra iPad and a third-generation internet-enabled "country phone" to be launched

next month under the name Telstra Explorer.

Mr Thodey said such devices would change the way people lived and worked and reduce the "tyranny of distance" as never before.

He said Telstra had made enormous improvements to communications in 10 years and mobile phone coverage was now available to 99 per cent of Australians.

Mr Thodey said the changes were of particular benefit to the health and education sectors and businesses were also joining in.

He visited the Border Express headquarters yesterday and met business and government leaders at a lunch at the Albury Club.