



MEDIA RELEASE

## LOCAL TELCO ANNOUNCES ANOTHER STRONG INTERIM RESULT

**Date:** March 16, 2009.

Bendigo Community Telco (BCT) is pleased to announce another solid interim profit result for the first half year ended 31 December 2008. Given the current economic climate Directors feel confident that our shareholders will be pleased the company has again provided a strong interim dividend of 5 cents per share. The company also made a number of substantial capital investments to enhance the range of services and its prospects, and to secure future revenue growth.

The interim profit result is down on the previous comparable reporting period due in part to the intensive competition and repricing in the Telco industry. The result also included a number of accounting adjustments none of which were of a material nature to both the current and prior reporting periods. "Considering the current economic climate, and our decision to continue to invest strongly into the business, we are pleased with the half-yearly profit result," Mr Hunt said.

Bringing competition to the Bendigo region was one of the strong drivers in starting a local telco, and we are continuing to do our job points out Chairman Rob Hunt. He also points out that given the current economic circumstances the company has produced a respectable profit result, while adding to its capacity to enhance the services it is able to provide to its existing and prospective customers. The chairman expressed his thanks to all customers and the community for their continued support of this important local enterprise.

Mr Hunt said, "Now in our ninth year of operation, it is pleasing to see that our focus on our customers' success and the success and resilience of our local Bendigo economy, together with the strategic advantage our business brings in terms of competition and price, continue to be the

company's motivating factors. We know we are making a real contribution in our local economy. We have increased local employment, increased competition in our market, we are retaining local capital in our economy, and we are deciding the priorities that we need addressed at a local community level.

Mr Hunt said, "While we accept these are challenging times for all, BCT is part of the community and we will work through these challenging times with our customers. We are confident BCT will continue to produce solid results, and that our focus on serving our customers and the community is second to none."

CEO Phil Lazenby said, "In these ever changing times we see the need to focus on adding value in our customers' businesses, above and beyond traditional fixed lines, mobiles and data services."

Mr Lazenby said the Telco's team of specialist technicians provides invaluable network and infrastructure advice to its customers, adding, "This means that businesses with limited IT or technical expertise can remain up to date with the latest in technology, gain access to specialist advice, and ensure their businesses remain efficient and competitive by utilising BCT's services – and all this as part of our overall added service."

"Our business has changed over the past few years, but our motive has not. We have increased our investment in our own network and infrastructure, but continue to focus on our customers' success rather than the products we provide or the individual company or carrier with which we deal.

"The company is in good shape and, with the continued investment in infrastructure, we are in a good position to grow our revenue base and maintain and control our operating expenses, thus enabling us to produce solid results.

"We now have 413 shareholders, predominantly local, who will receive an interim dividend of 5 cents per share fully franked, to be paid in April."

Mr Hunt pointed out that, while BCT is operating in a tough environment, it operates in a great community. "The report rightly acknowledges BCT's strong level of ongoing community support, Bendigo Community Telco Ltd trading as Bendigo Community Telco™ ABN 88 089 782 203



and we appreciate the loyalty of our customers and their ongoing commitment to this important local business. We also acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our management and staff to the business and to our community ideals.

“On the back of our investments, along with our strong connection with our customer base, we can look forward to the future with a good deal of optimism and genuine enthusiasm. We welcome prospective new shareholders and customers, and encourage them to join us and other locals in helping to enhance our region through this important community business. This local business is a great community asset. We are pleased with the company’s progress.”

BCT continues to support local projects and events, including the 2008 Community Carols. Mr Lazenby said, “Our company is very proud to have been the main sponsor for the Community Carols which with the support of the Bendigo Council, for the first time in several years, was brought back to its original home of Rosalind Park.”

##end##

For editorial comment and photo opportunities: Contact Bendigo Community Telco, CEO Phil Lazenby on 5454 5036 or 0400 545 000 (direct lines) Mr Lazenby will be available Tuesday morning for comment.

MEDIA RELEASE