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TELCO/ISP

Nextgen wins \$250m NBN backhaul project

By Ry Crozier

Dec 4, 2009 12:58 PM

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“@Bob, you've been believing your own spin and hype again. Telstra did not put NextG over the whole country in 10 months. I understand the coverage is less than twenty percent of the country, and ...”

By anonymous

100 regional towns get high-speed ADSL in 18 months.

Nextgen Networks will build all six backhaul links under the Government's \$250 million blackspot scheme, connecting 100 regional towns to high-speed broadband in just 18 months (see maps in gallery right).

At an event in Sydney today, Communications Minister Stephen Conroy inked the deal with the Leighton Holdings-owned network builder following a competitive tender.

Conroy said the "priority investment" will put 6,000 kilometres of fibre in the ground, benefiting more than 395,000 people in 100 regional communities.

The number of towns to benefit under the Nextgen proposal was significantly higher than the [previous announcements of blackspot locations](#) - Geraldton in Western Australia, Darwin, Emerald and Longreach in Queensland, Broken Hill in NSW, Victor Harbor in South Australia and South West Gippsland in Victoria.

Conroy said the "overall package in terms of where they were able to reach" had put Nextgen in the driver's seat for the project.

"It was their capacity to build beyond the original tender... in reaching 100 regional centres which is obviously more than [the initial] six," Conroy said.

Nextgen indicated that the Geraldton, Victor Harbor and Gippsland links would be completed first. These could be operational in as little as a year.

"The two areas that will take longer are Emerald/Longreach to Darwin and Broken Hill-Mildura-Shepparton," the Nextgen spokesman said.

Conroy said he expected all six links to be completed "in 18 months". He said construction would create 1,000 direct jobs.

Leighton Holdings chief Wal King said the construction efforts would inject money into the regional economy.

But he warned regional areas they could face some disruption during the construction phase.

"Unfortunately when we do build things they have some disruption. We'll work as hard as we can with the communities to [minimise it]," King said.

Preliminary work on the six links was underway and construction would

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begin shortly, Conroy said.

Route details

The Government released [a series of maps](#) and indicative route details for the backhaul links at the launch today.

The Darwin-Emerald-Longreach fibre will run over 3,835 kilometres and feature 42 backbone access points along the route. It will cost \$125.5 million.

The Broken Hill link will cover 1137 kilometres with 35 backbone access points along the way, at a cost of \$70.7 million.

The Geraldton link will run 426 kilometres, include six backbone access points and cost \$24.9 million to build.

Victor Harbor's link covers 129 kilometres and nine access points at a cost of \$12.6 million, and the South West Gippsland link will run for 215 kilometres, covering 10 access points and costing \$15.9 million.

[Read the reactions of Australian ISPs to the announcement here.](#)

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Comments: 11

Thoughts on this article? Add a comment below.

kwilla
Dec 4, 2009 2:37 PM
What the...?!!
According to that map there's already a major competitive backbone reaching Cairns. Why in the name of all that's holy isn't anybody using it????!!!!

MerariSchroeder
Dec 4, 2009 5:13 PM
I think the blue lines are existing, red lines are proposed. There are no red lines going to Cairns.

Rossyduck
Dec 4, 2009 5:14 PM
Why in all that's holy do people now want to put ADSL in these towns. Break out of current preconceptions and rather install GPON systems in the towns. All it takes is one roadside cabinet and around \$140000 for the fibre and ONT's.

MerariSchroeder
Dec 4, 2009 5:16 PM
Good to see some real progress. At least they can have ADSL2+ while Conroy sorts himself out concerning the NBN plan (which is currently not feasible).

Borgscan
Dec 4, 2009 7:02 PM
It's good to see some positive comments from you, Merari.
Since the government is paying for this backhaul, does that mean it'll automatically/seamlessly get transferred to the NBN?
I don't understand the ownership.

zag
Dec 5, 2009 1:51 AM
It's got nothing to do with putting DSL into these towns it'll be a backbone test of fiber and then a test of rolling out DSL2+ connections, which is what the NBN really is.
People thinking they are going to get a 1000MBPS fiber connection for \$10 a month are living in lala land.
Oh well break up Telstra and just wait for years and decades for some Gov Dept to get it's head out of rolling paper work and time wasting before anything NBN get rolled out.

anonymous
Dec 5, 2009 12:53 PM
And now a bit of reality, zag 01:51.
In all the talk about the NBN, nobody apart from you has ever referred to the possibility of getting 1Gig for ten bucks a month. You better go back to the Telstra cafeteria and have another cup of cocoa.

sydneyla
Dec 7, 2009 8:05 AM
When are the Australian people going to see a cost analysis and a proposed return on investment of the proposed NBN?

Maxxi
Dec 7, 2009 9:09 AM
@sydneyla : Telcos can only write a costs benefit analysis when they have the relevant data.

Bob
Dec 7, 2009 9:18 AM
Wow, 6 links of old DSL technology in 18mths. Didn't Telstra put the Next G network over the entire country in 10 mths?

"What! What do you mean Telstra are refusing to separate. But , but I waved my hand like a Jedi."
[on Caption Comp: What's up with Senator Conroy?](#)
by [Rhino](#) Dec 7, 2009 1:07 PM

"If only Telstra could have provided value for money plans..., they could have avoided this...!"
[on Telstra: Separation could be a \\$1bn IT project](#)
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"@Maxxi: Yes, detailed information from the implementation study will help paint the economic ..."
[on NBN Co fires starting gun for network vendors](#)
by [MerariSchroeder](#) Dec 7, 2009 12:14 PM

"@Bob, you've been believing your own spin and hype again. Telstra did not put NextG over the ..."
[on Nextgen wins \\$250m NBN backhaul project](#)
by [anonymous](#) Dec 7, 2009 11:29 AM

"@anonymous : Thanks for the clarification, appreciated. So where is your problem? @Sams: So I ..."
[on Christian Lobby buoyant on filtering after meeting Conroy](#)
by [Maxxi](#) Dec 6, 2009 10:55 PM

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anonymous

Dec 7, 2009 11:29 AM

@Bob, you've been believing your own spin and hype again.

Telstra did not put NextG over the whole country in 10 months. I understand the coverage is less than twenty percent of the country, and it took longer than 10 months.

There is also a slight difference between converting an existing mobile network (much of it paid for by taxpayers) to another system, and building a fibre backbone from scratch.

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