

1000 jobs for regional NBN project

Fran Foo | Australian IT | December 04, 2009 12:31PM

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BROADBAND blackspots in five states and the Northern Territory will be equipped with 6000km of fast broadband links in a federal government-funded project that will create 1000 jobs.

As foreshadowed by *The Australian* in October, the government today awarded Leighton Holdings' unit Nextgen Networks a \$250 million contract to build the backhaul service, Communications Minister Stephen Conroy said.

Nearly 400,000 people will benefit from the high-speed access that will be utilised by ISPs, with construction to be completed between 12 months and 18 months.

Nextgen said it will lay cables in priority areas from Toowoomba to Darwin, Perth to Geraldton, Shepparton to Adelaide, Mildura to Broken Hill, Sale to Wonthaggi and Adelaide to Victor Harbour ([map](#)).

The budget is allocated from the government's Regional Backbone Blackspots program.

Nextgen said it expects the investment in 100 regional locations to create more than 1000 full time equivalent jobs.

The \$43 billion national broadband network project kicked off with Tasmania laying fibre optic cables to 200,000 premises due to go online in July 2010.

The \$500m NBN in the Apple Isle will provide speeds of 100 megabits per second.

"These regional backbones are the first building blocks of the NBN on the mainland and will stimulate competition and better broadband services across regional Australia," Senator Conroy said.

"This is just the beginning and the NBN will ensure high-speed broadband is also expanded to all homes, schools and workplaces across Australia."

"I want to congratulate Nextgen on its successful tender to deploy nearly 6000km of new backbone broadband infrastructure for regional Australia," Senator Conroy said.

Five million dollars for regional NBN coordinator roles has been set aside to assist with the program.

Regional service providers and community groups have been urged by Nextgen to provide feedback on the construction progress on www.regionalbackboneblackspots.com.au.

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