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Nextgen wins NBN \$250m regional work

Technology: 4-December-09 by Edited announcement

Leighton-owned carrier Nextgen Networks has today been announced as the successful tenderer for the federal government's \$250 million regional blackspots program, part of the roll-out of the national broadband network.

The \$250 million Regional Backbone Blackspots Program, announced on 7 April 2009 as part of the Federal Government's 21st Century Broadband policy, will put in place key infrastructure for the roll-out of the National Broadband Network.

The program will deliver an immediate economic stimulus through the creation of more than 1,000 full time equivalent jobs and provide economic stimulus to many regional locations during the construction and operation of the network.

The program is designed to reduce the cost of broadband services into regional areas by bringing competing wholesale backhaul services to some of Australia's highest priced locations for wholesale telecommunications transmission, reducing the cost of broadband services, and increasing consumer choice of providers for both fixed line (DSL) and mobile services.

Nextgen will build fibre optic cable networks from Toowoomba to Darwin, Perth to Geraldton, Shepparton through Mildura to Adelaide, Mildura to Broken Hill, Sale to Wonthaggi and Adelaide to Victor Harbour and on to Mount Barker.

The program will provide approximately 395,000 people along the routes with alternative fixed access broadband arrangements, and bring immediate competitive broadband infrastructure outcomes to over 60 regional towns through the provision of alternate ADSL2+ services by ISPs utilising the new backhaul services.

"We are in an advanced stage of project readiness having walked the routes, undertaken design work and notified our suppliers" said Peter McGrath, Executive General Manager of Leighton's Telecommunications Division. "We are well positioned to commence construction activities shortly."

Nextgen will complete the construction of the new backhaul links within 18 months and will progressively be activating each link as they are completed; the first links will be completed within 12 months.

"Nextgen welcomes this Australian Government initiative to extend competitive wholesale services to under serviced areas of Australia," Mr McGrath said.

"We are excited to be taking on this important role that is a building block for delivering the NBN, and essential for providing immediate service outcomes to broadband users in regional Australia."

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