

Media Release

NBN Co announces “first release” sites for high-speed network

2 March, 2010

NBN Co Limited today announced the five “first release” sites where it will roll out the high-speed broadband fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) network as part of live trials of its network design and construction methods on mainland Australia.

The first release sites have been selected to test the impact on the rollout of different terrain, housing type and density, demographics, climate, existing infrastructure and other local factors. The sites also allow NBN Co to trial the technology, and how NBN Co will interact with retail service providers.

NBN Co Chief Executive Officer, Mike Quigley said: “The first release sites will provide critical information about the practical application of our designs, construction methods and technology in the real world. This will allow us to validate our network design and the total end-to-end systems in a live environment, following full testing in our integration labs.

“The first-release rollout will also allow us to test different construction techniques, so we have selected sites that represent the diversity of situations we will encounter across Australia in the volume rollout.

“As we have an obligation to build a ubiquitous fibre network available to 90% of premises, we need to understand the challenges of different locations and prepare to use different construction and design methods in every type of geography.

“We have selected a suburban area where we need to connect semi-detached houses, detached houses and apartment blocks. We have also selected a smaller rural town with more dispersed housing, and three other sites representing a mix of major regional, smaller regional and differing climate and geography,” Mr Quigley said.

Approximately 3000 premises are in each area selected, except the rural town where there are fewer dwellings.

The selected sites are:

- A part of the suburb of Brunswick in Melbourne
- An area of Townsville covering parts of the suburbs of Aitkenvale and Mundingburra
- The coastal communities of Minnamurra and Kiama Downs south of Wollongong
- An area of west Armidale, NSW, including the University of New England
- The rural town of Willunga in South Australia

NBN Co has issued a request for proposal (RFP) seeking suitably qualified companies to participate in the local design development specific to the selected sites. It will then enter a

detailed design phase which will take several months to complete. This will involve extensive survey and site examination works by network planners.

Following the design phase, actual construction work on the first release rollout is expected to start early in the second half of the year, and will be conducted in three stages.

- Stage one will see the deployment of the passive components of the network including the fibre optic cable.
- In stage two NBN Co will deploy some of the active network equipment in the Fibre Access Nodes. This is the equipment that allows NBN Co to “light up” the fibre in readiness for service delivery.
- Stage three involves working with retail service providers to give them access to the network and, via the network, to end-users so RSPs can test their retail services.

NBN Co will consult with the community about its plans during the design phase. The first two construction stages are planned for completion by early next year.

Further information, including site maps, is available at www.nbnco.com.au

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