

**Broadbanding
Australia**



Media Release

Queensland connected to the National Broadband Network

Deputy Prime Minister switches on network in Townsville

NBN Co names 500th mainland fibre optic trialist, exceeding target

1 September 2011

Residents in the North Queensland city of Townsville are the latest to gain access to high speed broadband delivered via fibre over the National Broadband Network (NBN).

Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, the Hon Wayne Swan MP, officially switched on the first fibre-based community in Queensland today at a ceremony at The Cathedral School in the Townsville suburb of Mundingburra.

The Townsville rollout of the fibre optic broadband service covers an area encompassing 3,100 premises in the city's western suburbs, of which 1950 (or 63%) consented to the connection of a line during construction to make their premises "NBN ready".

So far more than 110 homes, businesses and institutions in Townsville are connected to the network as part of a nationwide trial to test preparedness, with more connections in the queue.

The trial phase will continue until October, after which those located in the fibre coverage area will be able to order commercial high speed broadband and telephony services provided over the NBN from their chosen participating retail service provider.

All Australian residential and business premises are planned to be given access to the NBN as the old copper and HFC cable-based telecommunications networks are progressively decommissioned over the next decade.

Additionally, NBN Co announced today it had exceeded its target of attracting 400 homes and businesses on mainland Australia to the NBN trials, set out in its Corporate Plan of December 2010.

A small business, Mundingburra News and Casket Agency, was unveiled at today's launch event as the 500th mainland NBN trialist. The newsagent is a customer of local internet service provider Internet Solutions (who has purchased its access to the NBN via NBN Co customer and wholesaler Nextgen Networks) and is using its NBN connection to offer its patrons a free wi-fi connection.

An estimated 1,690 premises are now receiving services over the NBN via the mainland fibre trials in NSW, Queensland and Victoria, the first release sites in Tasmania and the company's interim satellite service, which is aimed at remote parts of the country.

NBN Co CEO Mike Quigley said:

"The NBN is not about pipes in the ground. It's a powerful tool with the potential to drive economic development and enable communities such as Townsville to compete with the big cities. The people of Townsville will be the first in Queensland to experience the tremendous benefits of NBN Co's fibre network infrastructure that will serve Australian homes, businesses, schools and hospitals for decades to come.

"The arrival of the NBN here represents the collective efforts of many people, including our construction partner Ergon Energy, Townsville City Council as well as business and community groups, local residents and the retail telecommunications companies."

Work on the NBN began in Townsville in August last year. The city is one of five first release sites on the Australian mainland. The trial site covers parts of the suburbs of Aitkenvale and Mundingburra, and is bounded by Ross River Road, China Street, the Ross River and the Bruce Highway/Nathan Street.

- Ends -

*The speeds actually experienced by end-users will depend on a number of factors including the retail broadband plan they choose, their equipment and their in-premises connection.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The NBN Townsville launch event also showcased an upcoming \$3.76 million trial of an NBN based scheme to assist people with diabetes in Townsville to access healthcare at home through teleconferencing. The tele-health application, delivered via broadband to the home, is designed to help diabetes patients better manage their condition and improve their health outcomes. The diabetes tele-health application, to be trialled by medical practices from the last quarter of 2011, aims to simplify patient monitoring and support. Additional information is available through Dr Kevin Arlett at Townsville General Practice Network, Phone 07 4725 8915.
- Around 1,690 homes and businesses across Australia are accessing services over the NBN, comprising: 655 premises in Tasmania, 580 brownfield and greenfield premises and 455 active services on the satellite platform.
- Six service providers are currently offering services over the NBN in Townsville: AARNet, iiNet, Internode, Nextgen Networks, Primus and Telstra.
- Twenty-eight telecommunications companies and internet service providers have signed up to participate in the NBN trial phase; 12 have completed NBN Co's certification process and are ready to test services. They are: AAPT, AARNet, Adam Internet, Exetel, iiNet, Internode, ispONE, Nextgen Networks, Optus, Platform Networks, Primus and Telstra.

Audio visual materials are available through:

<http://medianet.multimediarelease.com.au/bundles/37c699da-81a4-4faa-8cbc-657336c5dde2>