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HOLD NBN CO ACCOUNTABLE FOR SERVICE: OPTUS



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CommsWire/Telecommunications Editor: Stan Beer

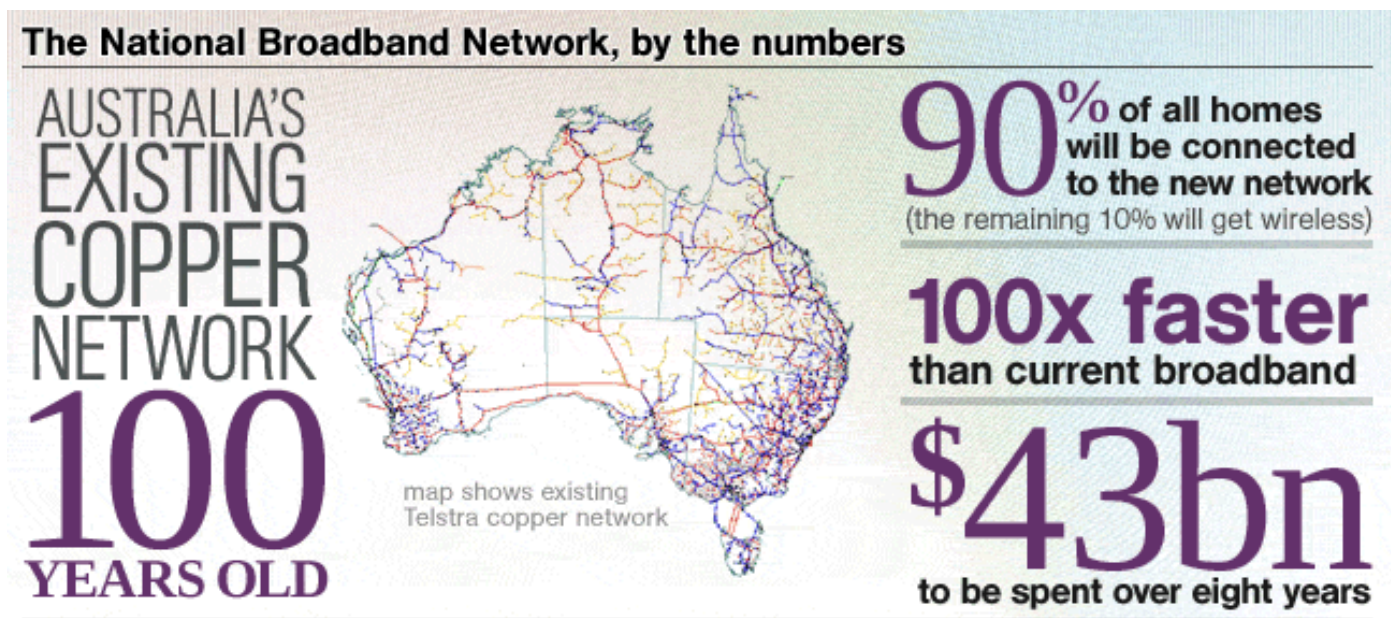
Staff writers: Peter Dinham, Alex Zaharov-Reutt, Sam Varghese. Columnist: John de Ridder

Advertising: CEO and Editor in Chief, Andrew Matler: andrew.matler@itwire.com • Tel: 0412 390 000

OPTUS CALLS FOR NBN CO TO PROVIDE MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS

Singtel Optus has called for the NBN Co to be made responsible for delivering services that can meet the minimum service levels required by retail standards or 50Mbps services on lines that can support such speeds.

The submission was made after the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission had released a second discussion paper on the NBN wholesale service standards inquiry issue.



An additional suggestion made by the telco was that the NBN Co should not be able to charge for a wholesale service for which retail service providers were not allowed to charge end-users.

Other recommendations made by Optus were:

- the NBN Co must develop automated processes that support retail speed testing and service continuity obligations; and
- NBN Co must be liable for costs incurred by RSPs as a result of non-working NBN services, where the fault lies with NBN Co.

Optus said: "The key focus of this inquiry should be to ensure that NBN Co's wholesale service standards support good consumer experience through timely resolution of issues, and by supporting RSPs in meeting their retail obligations.

"An effective service level framework should be robust, transparent and with real consequences for poor performance; such that these provide an incentive to address issues and drive improvements."

Sam Varghese



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TURNBULL ACCUSED OF SPREADING '5G MYTHS' IN LONDON

Former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull has been accused of spreading myths about the lack of separation between the 5G core and radio access network during a speech he gave to a conservative think tank in London last week.

Huawei Australia corporate and public affairs director Jeremy Mitchell said [in a blog post](#) that many myths had been spun by anti-Huawei forces.

"But there is one that was swallowed hook, line and sinker by the Turnbull Government and proudly used as a reason to block Huawei from 5G (though they were not brave enough to publicly name Huawei, ZTE or China)," Mitchell said.

As with all op-eds, the post carried a disclaimer that these were his own views and not necessarily those of the company.

Mitchell was referring to the ban imposed on the Huawei and ZTE bidding for contracts in the 5G networks that are expected to be rolled out across Australia in 2019 and the following years. It was announced shortly before the government dumped Turnbull as leader.

During [his speech](#), to the Henry Jackson Society, a neoconservative British foreign policy think-tank, in London on 5 March, Turnbull said: "Network function virtualisation and mobile edge computing means processing, or intelligence, will be distributed throughout the network, and the old distinction between the core and the radio access network (or edge) will no longer be applicable."

Mitchell said this falsely suggested that the edge or radio access layer of the network could not be sufficiently secured in a 5G network.

"[Is] the motivation for this position is to give justification on why Huawei was allowed to become the largest 4G vendor in Australia (with over half of Australians using some sort of Huawei equipment for mobile broadband), but is now all of a sudden not allowed to deliver 5G?" he asked.

"The US [provided the perfect answer](#) and this myth was born after the PM's visit to the US in February 2018. Problem is what they said (and Turnbull is now continuing to say) just isn't true." The reference was to a warning by the US to Turnbull not to use 5G equipment from Huawei in Australia, something *CommsWire* also [reported](#).

Last November, as *CommsWire* [reported](#), a 5G trial in Auckland conducted jointly by Huawei and New Zealand telco Spark, showed that this claim was just that – a claim.

The trial used a Huawei 5G NR (New Radio on both the C-band and mmWave) and a 4G Radio Access Network, both of which were deployed by using dedicated hardware connected to the Cisco Evolved Packet Core, with each component isolated.

Mitchell did not mention it, but similar claims about a lack of separation between the 5G core and the RAN have been made by the director of the Australian Signals Directorate [Mike Burgess](#) and [Nigel Phair](#), director of UNSW Canberra Cyber, as [pointed out](#) by Dr Mark Gregory, a network expert from RMIT University, recently.

The Huawei official pointed out that it was not only his employer which was saying the core and the RAN would be separated in 5G networks.

"It's not just Huawei saying this, but also the other vendors who are developing 5G; the global standards body setting the rules of 5G (3GPP); and the operators delivering 5G globally. But most importantly, and more embarrassingly for Turnbull, even the UK Government's cyber security experts are also saying the edge of the network can be secured under 5G," he said.

He cited Ian Levy, technical director of the UK National Cyber Security Centre, [as saying](#): "When you push core services closer to the edge, you can also push out the security services that support and protect them. This is the 'mobile edge compute' part of 5G.

"Now, in theory, you could push those services to the very edge of the network (that is, to each individual base station). That would be utterly crazy though, since it would be a massive pain to run the network, you couldn't secure it properly and — more importantly — there's no use case currently anticipated that would require it. In the UK, we currently reckon that we'll push core services out maybe as far as large metropolitan areas."

Mitchell also cited Turnbull's [statement](#) that, "one of the final decisions of my government was to ban telecommunications companies which could not meet our security requirements (such as Huawei and ZTE) from providing equipment to our new 5G phone networks, on national security grounds."

And he asked, "So how exactly was Huawei supposed to meet the government's security requirements if it didn't know what they were? How can we play by the rules if no rules are set or given? Huawei was playing the game blindfolded."

Mitchell said Turnbull's inclusion of a reference to the Parliament house breach in his London speech — "We saw in Australia only last month a cyber attack by a 'state actor' on our parliamentary computer systems, reaffirming the need to be innovative and agile in dealing with the growing threat" — gave the false impression that Huawei was somehow complicit in this too.

"For the record there is no Huawei kit in Parliament House," he said. "In fact, it is mostly US equipment that the hackers have allegedly walked through. This highlights that removing one particular vendor doesn't remove the threat. [The] same goes for 5G."

Sam Varghese



John de Ridder

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ANALYST FIRM EXPECTS 400M FEATURE PHONES TO SELL IN 2019

A shade over 400 million feature phones will be sold globally in 2019, the analyst firm Counterpoint Research has predicted, adding that shipments of this class of device are expected to cross a billion units by 2021.

In a blog post, the company's research director Peter Richardson said the growth would take place in India and the Middle East/Africa region, with about 75% of the market being taken up.



A feature phone is a candy bar or flip phone with basic features.

It has a browser, Twitter and even Google Maps, but has no touchscreen and has physical buttons for the dial pad.

"India and the Middle East/Africa region will see cumulative shipments of around 800 million feature phones out of more than one billion global feature phone shipments over the next three years," Richardson said.

"Globally, the feature phone segment is forecast to generate around US\$16 billion cumulatively in wholesale hardware revenues over the next three years."

He said a sizeable portion of the growth in India could be attributed to the revival of the Nokia-branded feature phones and the popularity of the Jio Phone, which was able to support smartphone-like features in a traditional feature phone form-factor.

The [Jio Phone](#) has been made available by Reliance, one of India's big companies, and

claims to have the biggest 4G network based on mobile data use.

Counterpoint said one of the main reasons for the rise of feature phone shipments was the affordability.

"There are more than three billion people across the world who live on an income of less than US\$2.50 per day," said associate director Tarun Pathak.

"This segment can neither afford a smartphone nor the data services demanded by the growing advancement in smartphone use-cases.

"Thus, a feature phone, coupled with basic mobile services has been the go-to offering for these users to communicate and connect.

"Most of these users are prevalent across Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America."

Pathak said network operators also had a business case to sell feature phones, as most of them were looking for people to upgrade from 2G or 3G to 4G.

"The problem is most of these users still cannot afford a 4G smartphone.

"Therefore, operators and the mobile industry players need to offer 4G VoLTE feature phones and move users to the more efficient 4G network," he added.

The increase of 4G capability in feature phones would contribute to increased sales, Counterpoint said.

Additional factors that were leading to the take-up of feature phones were that they were more resistant to breakage and used technologies like push-to-talk to cope with the environment. Battery life was another factor.

Research analyst Varun Mishra said: "The emerging markets of India and Nigeria have the greatest number of people without access to electricity.

"However, the phone remains an important part of people's lives in these regions as well.

"Amid the dearth of electricity, in some cases, the user is dependent on public charging stations (shops giving facilities to charge phones in return for a payment).

"Long battery life becomes crucial in such situations."

Sam Varghese

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TELCO INDUSTRY VETERAN VAUGHAN BOWEN JOINS UNITI WIRELESS

Australian-listed Internet service provider Uniti Wireless has appointed Vaughan Bowen, founder of telecommunications company M2 Group, as executive director.

A telecommunications industry veteran, Bowen will primarily focus on the strategic expansion of ASX-listed Uniti as it pursues its expansion strategy and mergers and acquisition.



Bowen (left) will also work closely with Uniti CEO, Michael Simmons, on organic business expansion opportunities, including the development of new products and markets.

“I have had the good fortune to be a part of growing a business in a similar manner previously, with valuable learnings of what to do and what not to

do,” Bowen said.

“The M&A opportunities for UWL are plentiful and I look forward to helping to continue to build momentum on this front in the near term and beyond.

“I am pleased to be joining the Board of UWL and to have the opportunity to work with Michael, the board and team on taking advantage of the platform UWL has established, by getting stuck into a program of targeted, well executed M&A.

“I genuinely believe the potential exists for the company to materially grow earnings, free cash flow and income diversity, which in turn will be reflected in strong and growing shareholder returns and the elevation of UWL to a sizable, highly profitable company over the medium term.”

In 2012 Bowen founded, seeded and continues to serve as Chairman of the Telco Together Foundation (“TTF”), the Australian telco industry’s only united charitable entity, endorsed by the Federal Government’s Department of Communications.

Peter Dinham

SMALL ISP CLAIMS FIRST WITH NBN 'NEW DEVELOPMENT' FEES

Small South Melbourne based NBN provider, Tangerine Telecom, has claimed to be the first telecommunications provider to offer discounted new development fees for NBN connections, which purportedly will reduce costs for new homeowners.

Tangerine claims its key points of difference in the telco sector is it's 14 day risk free trial, "unparalleled service and support, and industry leading online sign-up technology".



Tangerine Telecom's sister business is the B2B focused More Telecom which Tangerine says delivers more efficiency and faster speeds due to the balanced bandwidth loading between the business peak hours during the day and the consumer peak hours during the evening.

Tangerine says the business has a strong wholesale relationship with Australia's fourth largest telco Vocus Communications, which is connected to all 121 NBN POIs (Points of Interconnect) across Australia, giving both Tangerine and More national NBN coverage.

"Tangerine and More also benefit from a local POP (Point of Presence) in every major city,

reducing latency and ping times meaning great NBN broadband for households and businesses right across Australia," the company claims.

Tangerine says the 14 day risk free trial gives new customers a trial of the service with their money back if they are not satisfied.

"Over the past six months, less than 0.5% of customers have taken advantage of this offer and cancelled their account.

"Tangerine's online sign-up has been designed to be the most user-friendly, fast and efficient on the market. Signing up takes five minutes on average, providing quick and easy options for the increasing number of online customers wanting easy quick service."

Peter Dinham

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