

CommsWire

Essential daily reading for the communications industry executive

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Editor: Stan Beer

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GIGABIT HFC COULD BE ANSWER TO CVC SAYS ISP



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ISP BACKS NBN CO EFFORTS TO BRING GIGABIT SPEEDS TO HFC

NBN Co's efforts to get gigabit speeds on HFC will help alleviate the scaling problem that exists due to the pricing model for CVC, according to the head of a local ISP.

Damian Ivereigh, chief executive of the Launceston-based Launtel, told *ITWire* in response to queries that he was looking forward to having the technology turned on.

"We would also like to see how the service performs in the real world with multiple services, given that HFC is by its nature a shared infrastructure," he added.

Earlier this month, the NBN Co [said](#) it had achieved trial download speeds of 994Mbps on the HFC network, using next-generation DOCSIS 3.1 technology.

The trials were conducted in Templestowe in outer Melbourne and the company said they demonstrated the potential for around 2.5 million homes and businesses that use or are due to be connected to the HFC access network across Australia.

The rollout of the national broadband network is due to be completed next year, with fibre to the home (brownfields and greenfields) going to 1.9 million premises, fibre to the node supplying 4.7 million, fibre to the curb 1.4 million, fixed wireless 600,000 and satellite 400,000.

Said Ivereigh: "One of the biggest issues with providing services faster than 100Mbps is the scaling problem due to the CVC pricing construct. Because right now only FttP can get speeds higher than 100Mbps, it means that you have to provision a lot of expensive CVC to support relatively few services."

In Australia, the AVC charge for a 100Mbps connection is \$38 while the CVC is \$15.25 per Mbps (1.4Mbps required). For a gigabit connection, the AVC is \$150, while the CVC is \$15.25 per Mbps, with 2.5 to 3Mbps required.

Costs such as backhaul, operations, sales and marketing and telephony costs are excluded from these amounts.

"By adding HFC to the list of tech that can do more than 100Mbps it will increase the opportunities for RSPs to sell these higher speeds at an economically attractive price," Ivereigh said.

"We are also looking forward to NBN Co adding FttC to this list.

"We are currently giving feedback to NBN Co as part of their pricing review about the whole CVC construct and in particular how it could be amended to allow services faster than 100Mbps to be sold."

Sam Varghese

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PENNYTEL PAIRS LOW-COST PHONES WITH LOW-COST PLANS

MNF Group subsidiary Pennytel has begun selling handsets rather than just SIMs and plans. Its first two handsets are the Nokia 3.2 and Nokia 4.2 with both models aggressively priced at an introductory offer until mid-August.

As an introductory offer, Pennytel is reducing the price of both models by 25% until 18 August 2019.

That means the Nokia 3.2 costs \$186.75 rather than \$249, and the Nokia 4.2 is \$224.25 instead of \$299.

Both models are Android based, and Pennytel throws in a free case with each phone.



Pennytel's target market is the over 55s, and the company's research revealed that the three most important handset factors for this group are purchase price, battery life and screen size.

Furthermore, 78% prefer to buy a phone outright.

"We have always been about great coverage, real value and excellent

customer service and by offering these Nokia handsets, we're working with a trusted brand to supply high spec phones at a competitive price," said Pennytel consumer general manager Tomas Diaz.

"We believe affordable smartphones with the latest features and trends should be readily available to everyone in any area.

"For customers who are putting up with an old phone that no longer works, is slow or doesn't support the latest updates, this new offering allows an upgrade to something more reliable and secure."

[Pennytel's plans](#) start at \$10.99 a month for unlimited calls and texts, plus 1GB of data.

The first three months charges are discounted by 25% if ordered before 18 August 2019.

Stephen Withers



John de Ridder

Telecommunications Economist

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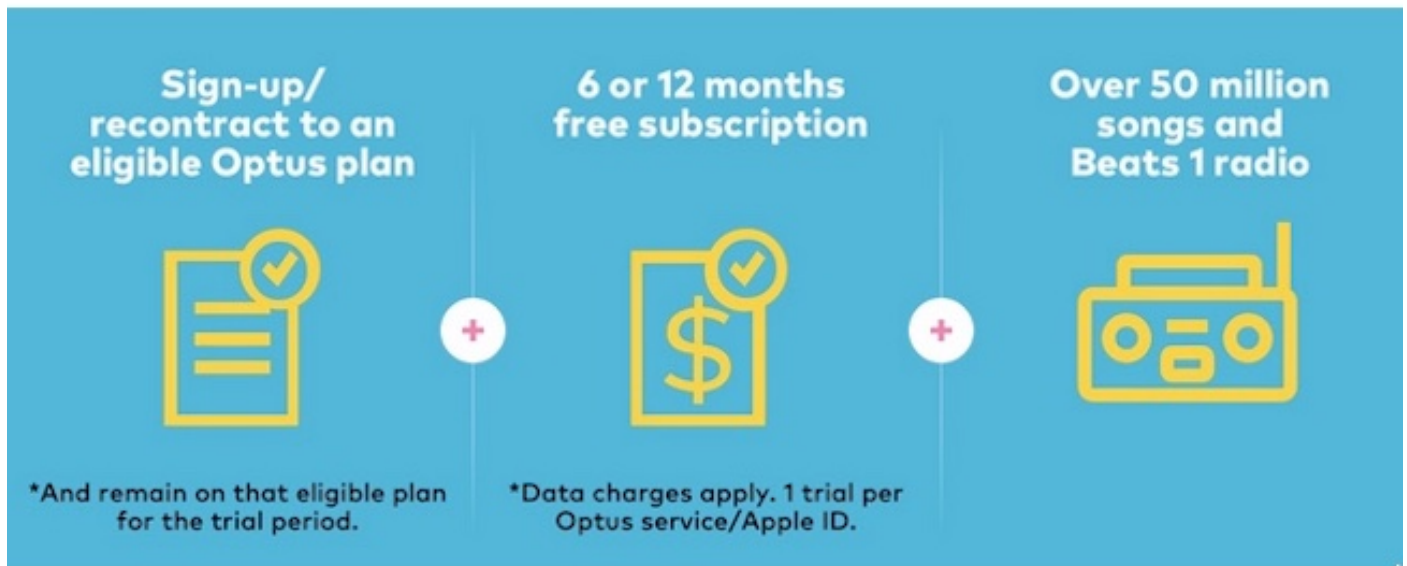
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OPTUS INTRODUCES APPLE MUSIC TRIAL FOR MOBILE PLANS

Singtel-owned Optus has begun offering new and re-contracting mobile customers on "selected" plans a six or 12 month trial of Apple Music.

Optus is being rather vague about exactly which plans attract a [free Apple Music trial](#).

However, as far as we can tell from its website, a six month trial comes with the \$30 and \$40 per month SIM-only plans and the \$45 and \$65 'with a phone' plan (NB, the latter prices exclude handset repayments).



The \$50 a month SIM only plan and the \$85, \$105 and \$125 (though currently \$106.25) 'with a phone' plans include a 12 month trial.

The SIM only plans involve a 12 month contract, while the others involve a 24 month commitment.

It is possible that other plans include the free trial.

"We are excited to offer Apple Music to Optus customers and help more Australians connect and share the joys of streaming music on our amazing network," said Optus vice president of TV, content and product development, Clive Dickens.

"With this new exclusive offer, we are aiming to introduce more Australians to the ease and convenience of finding a classic favourite or discovering brand new songs and artists with Apple Music, whether in the car, at home or at work."

Stephen Withers



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NEC AUST SEEKS COMPENSATION FOR TERMINATED CONTRACT

NEC Australia is taking court action to seek financial compensation over the termination of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission Biometric Identification Services project for which it was contracted two years ago.

NEC issued a statement on Friday saying that it had commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria seeking recovery of costs and expenses following the June 2018 termination “for convenience” of the contract.

NEC has not publicly disclosed details of its financial claim.



The court action comes after NECA was chosen in 2016 by CRIMTRAC — the predecessor of ACIC — as the successful tenderer to deliver the BIS project for Australia’s Federal, State and Territory Police agencies.

The aim of the BIS project was to upgrade the agencies' biometrics capabilities from the current fingerprint-only solution to a multi-modal finger, facial and fusion solution.

In its statement NEC noted that, in June 2018 when the BIS system was substantially built and ready to undergo systems testing by ACIC, the latter took the “curious decision” to terminate the BIS project, “for convenience” (a process whereby a party to a contract can terminate, even though the other party is not in breach).

As [CommsWire reported](#) in January this year, the [Australian National Audit Office](#) slammed the ACIC over the failure of the biometric identity project, contracted to NEC, that had to be junked after more than two years and expenditure of \$34 million.

In its statement released on Friday, NECA says that since the termination in June 2018, it had been attempting to recover its costs, “however unsuccessfully”.

“As a result and after careful deliberation, NEC Australia has decided to take legal action to recoup its costs directly related to the project by commencing legal proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria.

“NEC has a proud history of developing and delivering biometrics projects all over the world, much of it for governments and NECA was excited about the prospect of delivering a new biometrics project for Australians.”

NEC cited the 56-page report produced by the ANAO in relation to the project, noting that it had concluded that "the subsequent administration of the BIS project by CrimTrac and ACIC was deficient in almost every significant respect".

And NEC also noted that following this report, the Federal Government’s [Joint Parliamentary Committee on Law Enforcement](#) had also considered the events surrounding the terminated contract.

“In neither report is NEC criticised for its handling of the BIS project,” NEC says in its statement.

“NEC Australia maintains it met all terms of its contract and was disappointed and surprised that a decision was taken to terminate at what it deems was beyond the 11th hour in the BIS project.

“NEC also notes that the ACIC CEO directed no criticism towards NEC for its expertise in areas such as Biometric project rollouts.”

NEC says in the statement that it “fully respects the right of the ACIC and its CEO to terminate a contract for reasons they see fit”.

The company added that, “nevertheless a substantial investment in this project was made by NEC and the company is simply seeking to have the investment at the time the contract was terminated for convenience, returned”.

Peter Dinham

KLEOS SATELLITE LAUNCH RE-SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR

Luxembourg-based space technology operator Kleos Space says its scouting mission satellite launch period has been extended to October by launch provider Rocket Lab.

Kleos says the planned second mission will be focused on delivering enhanced coverage of the earth closer to the equator, increasing the company's revenues and customer base.

Kleos' CEO Andy Bowyer said, "We are well prepared for this launch date extension. Launches are exceptionally complex and often prone to delays. Our competent team will use this extra time to expand the number of customer contracts secured, to continue to develop our data products, and rapidly progress our 2nd generation satellites.

"The planned 2nd mission will be focused on delivering enhanced coverage of the Earth closer to the equator, increasing our revenues and our customer base.

"Developing the second-generation satellites at this early stage will allow us to gain advantage following the successful launch of the Scouting Mission and allow us to stay on schedule for the overall business growth," Bowyer said.

Rocket Lab chief executive Peter Beck said "Following six successful orbital missions since January 2018, Rocket Lab is rapidly scaling production and launch operations to meet growing market demand. We look forward to launching Kleos satellites in the coming months as we continue to increase our launch cadence."

"As a responsible and highly focussed Space business we are constantly aware of the complexities of the space industry and we are prepared to take advantage of unplanned opportunities," Bowyer added.

"Kleos is doing everything possible to minimise schedule movements and launch the Kleos satellites into orbit as quickly as possible.

"The Kleos Scouting Mission launch is dependent on parties outside of Kleos control. Notwithstanding that our team has ensured that our satellites are mission ready, but we cannot launch without a vehicle.

"Due to Rocket Lab's manifest requirements and their evolving production schedule, Kleos' next available launch opportunity has been extended beyond our contractual launch period ending August 2019 to October 2019.

"We have been advised that Rocket Lab is doing everything possible to minimise schedule movements and launch the Kleos satellites as quickly as possible."

Peter Dinham

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