



Media Release

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Buzz Aldrin over the moon about NBN satellites

Giant leap in communications for outback Australia

Western Australia has been selected as the location for three new satellite ground stations to help Australians in isolated areas connect to high speed broadband.

The facilities in Geraldton, Carnarvon and Kalgoorlie will act as essential transmission centres to deliver services over the National Broadband Network to outback communities across the state and across the nation.

They will also provide a boost to the local economies when construction begins next year. An estimated 20-30 construction workers will be required to build each of the facilities, which have received the support of civic leaders (see below).

The NBN is a vital national infrastructure project that plans to connect every home and business in Australia to high speed broadband via fibre optic cable, fixed wireless and satellite within the next decade.

The news was welcomed half a world away by American astronaut Buzz Aldrin. In a previous incarnation, the Carnarvon site played an important role in providing reliable and high quality communications for NASA's manned space flight programme and the Apollo moon landings.

"I was told this was on the cards when I visited Carnarvon in July to open the town's Space and Technology Museum," said Dr. Aldrin.

"I think it's just wonderful that Carnarvon will soon be reviving its historic links with space with the launch of a National Broadband Network satellite base station. The revitalisation of a site that played such a central role in NASA's Apollo missions will prepare people in the Australian outback for the next frontier in communications via the National Broadband Network."

Dr. Mal Bryce, chairman of the WA scientific and research organisation iVEC, said:

"High speed, robust and ubiquitous broadband is an absolute prerequisite for the most isolated parts of WA. The NBN's satellite service represents a lifeline for people in regional and remote areas. It will ensure they have access to economic and social opportunities that the rest of us take for granted."

The NBN's Interim Satellite Service is already delivering reliable, high-speed broadband to more than 10,000 homes, farms and businesses in rural and remote parts of Australia, offering wholesale download speeds of up to 6 Mbps.*

The new satellite ground stations will support the NBN's Long Term Satellite Service, which is expected to begin operating in 2015. Two NBN communications satellites are currently under construction and will deliver wholesale speeds of up to 12Mbps.*

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Notes to Editors

About the WA satellite ground stations

- NBN Co is working with the relevant authorities in each location to ensure the three WA satellite ground stations meet local planning requirements. The proposed sites are:

CARNARVON

The Shire of Carnarvon Council has approved the negotiations for sale of land to NBN Co adjacent to the former Overseas Telecommunications Commission site on Brown Range, approximately 5km east of Carnarvon.

Carnarvon Shire President, Karl Brandenburg, said: “The new NBN ground station is set to give Carnarvon an economic boost, which is great news for the area and an important initiative that has actively been pursued by Council staff. We look forward to playing a part in connecting Australians living in rural and remote parts of the country to the NBN.”

MOONYOONOOKA, NEAR GERALDTON

The Moonyoonooka ground station is planned to be located on Abattoir Road, approximately 13km east of Geraldton.

Geraldton Mayor Ian Carpenter said, “NBN Co’s decision to base one of its satellite ground stations in the Greater Geraldton area is a strong vote of confidence in our ability to be a major technology hub in the west of the country.”

BINDULI, NEAR KALGOORLIE

The Binduli ground station is planned to be located on Hall Road, approximately 11km south west of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Mayor of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Council, Ron Yuryevich, said: “We welcome NBN Co’s investment in the Binduli area and we look forward to being part of an important national project to connect Australians living in rural and remote parts of the country to the NBN.”

About NBN Co’s satellite service

- The Long Term Satellite Service forms part of NBN Co’s plan to deliver high-speed broadband to every Australian premises by 2021.
- The wholesale high-speed broadband network is available to telephone and internet service providers on non-discriminatory terms, allowing them to offer a range of plans and packages to consumers and businesses.
- Rather than splitting capacity between a number of other tasks such as satellite phones and broadcast television, or between a number of countries, NBN Co’s two Ka-band broadband satellites will have multiple high-capacity beams designed to maximise the efficiency of the broadband service specifically for Australia.
- Satellite ground stations have previously been announced for Wolumla and Bourke in NSW Ceduna in SA and Geeveston in TAS.
- The full eligibility criteria for NBN Co’s Interim Satellite Service can be found on the NBN Co website www.nbnco.com.au/satellite or by calling 1800 881 816.

*NBN Co is designing the NBN to be capable of delivering these speeds to NBN Co's wholesale customers (retail service providers). Speeds actually achieved by retail customers (end users) will depend on a number of factors including the quality of their equipment and in-premises connection, the broadband plans offered by their service provider and how their service provider designs its network to cater for multiple end users.