

new subscribers who might be left out. “So yes, there may be, but I think the information will [primarily] assist us to better educate [our customers] in the months and years to come.”

“Awareness of the NBN is increasing daily as the network rolls out,” responded an NBN Co spokesperson. “NBN Co research shows that there is a 90% awareness of the NBN in the first 15 communities. Over the past 18 months NBN Co has run a comprehensive communication campaign – such as community information sessions, local advertising, media, door to door service call and direct mail.”

In a separate release, NBN Co itself noted that the “overwhelming majority” of people – some nineteen thousand homes and businesses – in the first cutover areas had made the switch-off during the last eighteen months. The first regions scheduled for disconnection include parts of Armidale and Kiama in New South Wales, Brunswick and South Morang in Victoria, Townsville in Queensland, Willunga in South Australia and Deloraine, George Town, Kingston, Sorrell, St Helens and Triabunna in Tasmania. However, NBN Co urged the “few remaining” homes and business owners who’d not yet ordered NBN services to do so as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission noted that, while Telstra will begin disconnecting premises in a region 18 months after NBN services are available in that area, there were a number of exceptions – such as cases where consumers and businesses had placed an order for NBN services but where NBN Co had not completed the connection process. It also pointed out that there were additional safeguards to protect customers facing disconnection.

Richard van der Draay

ACCC approves Telstra measures to help migrate consumers to NBN

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has approved Telstra’s proposed ‘pull-through’ measures to support the migration of customers onto the NBN.

In some instances, NBN Co may need to use an existing copper or HFC line to pull the NBN fibre through the conduit leading from the street to the premises to connect that household to the NBN. This process results in a temporary outage to the existing services. Accordingly, the measures outlined in Telstra’s migration plan include those by which the telco would obtain consent of its wholesale customers for NBN Co in order to pull through lines over which that wholesale customer provides services. The plan also specifies measures on how Telstra would notify wholesale customers if the pull through process was unsuccessful.

While the ACCC signed off on Telstra’s broader migration plan several months ago, the pull-through measures had remained outstanding; the regulator signalled last December that it was not at the time satisfied with the proposed timeframes for notifying wholesale customers. This March, Telstra agreed to changing the problem elements, committing to notifying customers within two business hours of being advised by NBN Co of pull-through work in 90% of cases, and within four hours for remaining cases.

“Certain households and businesses are more difficult to connect to the NBN fibre than others. These measures may potentially help NBN Co to connect these premises while minimising the disruption in service to consumers,” said ACCC commissioner Cristina Cifuentes.

Richard van der Draay

ACMA takes flak for C-band stance

As satellite and terrestrial mobile players prepare for a reignited war over C-band spectrum, the Australian Communications and Media Authority is under fire from a previous regulatory head for its preliminary views on the looming battle. The issue is set to explode at next year’s International Telecommunications Union World Radiocommunications Conference.

Critically, the Australian regulator has given early indications it won’t seek an identification for

international mobile telecommunications in the 3.7-4.2GHz section of the C-Band. But Dr. Bob Horton, ex-chair of ACMA antecedent the Australian Communications Authority, argues that unless it actively opposes other countries' potential efforts to allocate IMT a slice of the C-band, Australia's spectrum regulator is essentially passively supporting them – with potential global or regional consequences that could still impact Australian stakeholders.

Agenda item 1.1 for WRC-15 includes consideration of the identification of additional frequency bands for IMT use and is shaping up to blow the lid off a conflict that flared up as long ago as WRC in 2007. Mobile players have argued that massive spikes in smartphone usage growth and soaring mobile broadband demand mean they should get access to a chunk of the C-band spectrum heavily used by satellite operators. But some satellite firms say that their mobile opponents are overstating that demand – and have also expressed concerns that terrestrial activities in parts of the C-band might cause sufficient interference to hamstring their own operations there.

Speaking at the Australasia Satellite Forum in Sydney, ACMA executive manager for spectrum planning and engineering Christopher Hose was careful to remind the audience that international and domestic spectrum debates were separate. “The question of if, when and how a band is repurposed in Australia for mobile broadband is a separate domestic discussion and would result from further consultation,” he said. He did, however, acknowledge that “international IMT debates are in some ways a bellwether for... where future domestic interest for mobile broadband may come.”

Hose said that the ACMA had now almost developed preliminary views on all the potential candidate bands and flagged a number particularly relevant to satellite players. These included not supporting IMT identification in the S-band 2GHz space operations spectrum, supporting IMT identification in 3.4-3.7GHz C-band earth receive band; not to seek an identification in 3.7-4.2GHz in C-Band and, on the uplink in C-band, not seeking IMT identification and opposing identification “unless suitable regulatory measures are adopted to ensure co-existence with the fixed satellite service.”

But Horton argued, even if it did not actively seek an IMT allocation for key parts of the C-band, the ACMA was passively supporting other jurisdictions' calls to be able to use of the band for IMT if it did not actively oppose these, with regional or global implications around general use of the band that could ultimately impact Australian stakeholders.

“What I'm saying is that Australia will not seek to protect satellite services in the C-band; it will not be resisting or speaking against other propositions to identify or allocate C-band for IMT purposes,” said Horton.

Hose, though, contended that the preliminary views would see ACMA essentially keeping to a neutral stance. “Other countries' [use of the] C-band is in their interests; if they want an IMT allocation within those bands, we won't be opposing their decisions.”

Petroc Wilton

TUANZ appoints Chorus exec as new CEO

The Telecommunication Users Association of New Zealand has appointed former Chorus industry relations lead Craig Young as its new CEO. Young will take over from outgoing CEO Paul Brislen in October.

Young was with Chorus for the past six years, having joined the carrier at the date of operational separation in 2008 as the head of business development. Prior to Chorus he was the GM of wholesale commercial development at TelstraClear.

TUANZ chair Pat O'Connell said Young would bring a wealth of industry experience to the role.

“We are particularly pleased to have attracted someone of Craig's calibre and experience”, said O'Connell. “This is strong affirmation of the critical role TUANZ plays in the New Zealand telecommunications sector.”

Young said he looked forward to the opportunity to shape TUANZ as it enters its next phase of development.

“I look forward to working closely with members to ensure that TUANZ provides leadership in the