

# COMMUNICATIONS DAY

**4 June 2026****News and analysis about ANZ telecom and digital infrastructure****ISSUE 7380**

## Optus calls for 6G standard fit for Australia

Optus CTO Sri Amirthalingam has called for operators and vendors to ensure 6G is fit for the realities of Australia, including low-band spectrum support that can deliver wide-area coverage and support use cases suited to the nation's geography and industries. "We cannot simply inherit a 6G that was designed for other markets," Amirthalingam told the CommsDay Summit.

6G was "not another G in the way we've historically thought about it," the CTO said, but instead represented a "fundamental shift in what a network is."

"We are moving to AI-native networks: networks that don't just carry traffic, but understand it, predict it, and adapt and heal in real time," Amirthalingam said.

He pointed to the expected rise of agent-to-agent traffic at scale, the emergence of network-based sensing and the increasing integration of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks.

"You'll begin to see it arrive through 5G Advanced, and not long after, through 6G," the CTO said. "And 6G will not be a distant horizon; it will come faster than many expect."

The 2028 Olympics in the US would be a "powerful catalyst" for the next-generation standard, while the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane also represented a unique opportunity for the local industry, he said.

However, Amirthalingam warned that much of the thinking around 5G had focused on supporting dense metro areas, high revenue per user and short-range, high-capacity deployments.

"That is not our reality," he told the conference. "Australia is vast, it is sparsely populated, it is exposed to fire and flood."

He also noted the heavy reliance on remote industries, long-distance logistics, and maritime and regional services.

Amirthalingam said Australia's mobile network operators needed spectrum that was available when required to support emerging services and priced at a level that was affordable enough to support innovation.



Sri Amirthalingam

He said that with the 6GHz, 600MHz and 2GHz MSS bands, the question was not just allocation, but “can we afford to build what we are being enabled to build?”

“We need to work as an industry with regulators to enable 6-7GHz availability in Australia for 6G,” he said. Optus had been testing the spectrum with vendors and had raised the issue with the Australian Communications and Media Authority, he added.

Alongside spectrum, Amirthalingam raised satellite sovereignty as another “friction point”, with satellites “no longer fringe” but instead critical national infrastructure. However, he noted that most of the infrastructure sat outside Australian control.

“What does sovereignty look like in a sky-based network?” he asked.

Amirthalingam also flagged the issue of how MSS spectrum was shared between mobile and satellite operators as another point of friction, along with the question of who owned the customer experience amid the convergence of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks.

Amirthalingam said the path to 6G could not be a “wholesale reset”.

“We should be advocating for... dynamic spectrum sharing to reuse existing assets, low-band support for 6G that suits Australia, and an evolutionary model, not a rip-and-replace cycle,” the CTO said.

6G should not simply be a faster version of 5G, he said.

“This is our moment to think bigger, to build an ecosystem of meaningful use cases that don't just benefit Australians, but fundamentally transform how we live, work and respond as a nation,” he added.

Rohan Pearce

## **Creation of Telstra Digital Infrastructure to help meet demands of AI ecosystem**

The planned merger of Telstra InfraCo, Telstra International and Field Services is aimed at ensuring the company can better satisfy demand generated by the AI boom, according to Telstra Digital Infrastructure CEO Steven Worrall.

Telstra is consulting on the proposal, with the aim of formally establishing Telstra Digital Infrastructure on 1 July.

At the CommsDay Summit on Wednesday, Worrall said the combined unit was expected to be able to adapt more quickly to the rapid changes affecting the industry as AI technology reshaped demand for connectivity.

“We want to be very clear in relation to our role to connect Australia to the global digital supply chain, and [be able to] ensure that Australians have access to the very best digital infrastructure that there is available on the planet, so that we can continue to drive the investments that are necessary to build our AI ecosystem, and in turn all Australians can profit and prosper through this period,” he said.

“We're organising ourselves in a different way to align with the strategy that we



Steven Worrall

have to serve Australia in the most effective way that we can.”

Telstra’s extensive infrastructure assets would be essential enablers of the AI-enabled economy in Australia, he said. The company operated more than 400,000km of subsea fibre, more than 250,000km of terrestrial fibre and a range of mobile and satellite assets, Worrall said.

“Together with the NBN, we provide the digital backbone to the nation today, but of course we need to continue to invest in that network,” he said.

To this end, Worrall said Telstra was investing heavily in the deployment of its Aura inter-capital fibre network. The company was just over halfway through the build, having deployed more than 8,400km of the planned 14,000km network, he said. Telstra’s economic analysis forecast that once complete, the Aura network would deliver \$29bn in economic value to the nation and create 84,000 jobs.

“This is truly nation-building work, and it’s hard work in harsh environments, and we think it’s an important contribution to building out the new networks and the new capability that’s necessary for the country,” Worrall said.

He said Telstra’s recently announced partnership with Google would see the hyperscaler become the single largest user of the Aura network.

“It validates the decision that the board took several years ago to build this network [to meet] the capacity requirements that we’re seeing from the hyperscalers and the large AI model providers,” he said.

**COLLABORATION IS KEY:** Worrall said the Australian telecom industry would need to come together to ensure that the economic value created through AI in Australia remained in the country.

“There’s a related thought, of course, which is how do we ensure that economic surplus is created,” he said. “And I think that’s a case that we need to make together, not just this industry, but government working with industry and the community.”

It would be particularly important for the industry to come together to address network resilience at a national level, Worrall said.

“That’s going to take all of us working together, because there are assets across every organisation represented here in the room that will form part of that national resilient network that we know we will need in an increasingly contested environment and an increasingly difficult geopolitical environment,” he said.

“Capital is also a part of this. We need to think about capital requirements, because again, no single organisation in this room has the capital to build out the infrastructure that’s necessary for our modern economy. If we get the foundations right, Australia will not just participate, but will shape what happens next.”

**TELSTRA MARKS SATELLITE-TO-MOBILE ANNIVERSARY:** Telstra has marked the first anniversary of its satellite-to-mobile messaging service, saying daily connections had grown from about 80,000 to more than 200,000 over the past year. The telco said more than 2.7 million users had connected through the service over the period in locations where they previously lacked connectivity. Telstra group executive of network product and technology Kim Krogh Andersen said the service had provided another connectivity option beyond the reach of the mobile network. Telstra said the service had also added resilience during disruptions, including Victorian bushfires earlier this year and an August 2025 outage affecting mobile sites between Nowra

and Eden. The service also won best national mobile network initiative or partnership at the CommsDay Edison Awards.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## **Fibre overtakes copper as dominant NBN fixed-line technology**

Fibre to the premises has overtaken legacy copper as the dominant fixed-line access technology in Australia, NBN Co CEO Ellie Sweeney told the CommsDay Summit yesterday.

Sweeney said NBN Co now had about 3.2m active FTTP connections, representing around 37% of active services.

“When customers move from copper to fibre, the change goes beyond speed,” she said. “We see it in how they use the network, with data usage increasing by around 19% over the past year.

“And as demand rises, the measure that increasingly matters is not peak speed on a good day — it is whether performance is consistent during the busiest hours, and whether services stay available when conditions are difficult.”

Sweeney said FTTP had delivered 99.98% availability over the past year, underscoring the reliability gains NBN Co was seeking from the migration away from copper-based networks.

More than 5m premises could now order full-fibre services, with the transition to FTTP having reached “a clear inflection point”, she said.

“Two years ago, just over two million premises were served by fibre; today it is 3.2 million.”

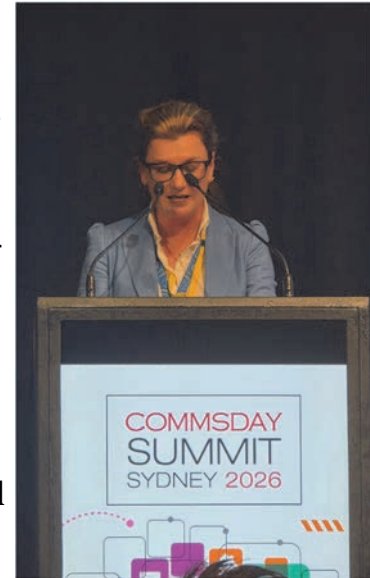
Around 47,000 end users were upgrading to FTTP each month, with NBN Co expecting to complete more than 560,000 fibre upgrades this year, ahead of plan.

Sweeney said delivering an upgrade path to FTTP for the final tranche of 622,000 customers in the fibre-to-the-node footprint was a major focus for the company.

“Right across cities and regional towns, NBN and its delivery partners have now laid more than 100,000 kilometres of fibre across the country,” she said.

Around 84% of locations in the remaining FTTN upgrade program had progressed through detailed design, with 30% in construction and about 35,000 premises already able to order an FTTP upgrade. Sweeney also pointed to a material shift in the uptake of higher-speed services since NBN Co introduced its Accelerate Great speed uplift last year. She said close to 400,000 end users were now on gigabit services, while 34% of NBN services were on 500Mbps or faster plans, compared with 3% a year earlier. Around 43% of services were on plans of 100Mbps or faster.

Rohan Pearce



Ellie Sweeney

## Aussie Broadband calls for SIP speed boost

Aussie Broadband group CEO Brian Maher has called for the Statutory Infrastructure Provider baseline to be lifted from 25/5Mbps to 100/20Mbps by 2028.

Maher said the move was “imperative”, with other countries including the US already moving to raise their broadband baselines.

“The 25 over 5 baseline was conceived as a minimum ‘floor’ in 2020 but no longer reflects today’s household reality nor international benchmarks,” Maher said at the CommsDay Summit.

“Yes, there have been consultations over the past year with the government signalling that, on reasonable requests, a SIP must be able to deliver retail services with at least 100 megabits per second for download. And last year NBN said it supported this ambition to uplift from 25 to 100 over time. But while we’re consulting, others are acting and implementing.”

Maher endorsed NBN Co’s move towards more proactive upgrades to full fibre.

The CEO’s address focused strongly on regional connectivity. “Regional Australians don’t just deserve better internet: they deserve the same quality of connection as metropolitan users,” he said.

“Reliable connectivity is essential infrastructure for regional prosperity,” Maher said.

Maher said the reliance on copper remained a challenge. One challenge in addressing the technology divide “is the need to move beyond legacy technologies like copper towards the technology of today, fibre”.

“We know fibre is more reliable and future-proof than legacy copper lines, which degrade more frequently and have higher maintenance costs,” he said.

“Diverting funding from the maintenance of copper to more modern networks like fibre will reduce the multimillion-dollar burden this has on the taxpayer. It will also mean that, instead of remediating a technology that we know has higher latency and is more susceptible to disruption from poor weather, we are making those funds count for end users rather than against them.”

Maher said in areas where fibre accessibility posed a problem, the government should consider guaranteeing technology-appropriate SIP compliance.

“This could come in the form of fixed wireless and satellites paired with priority fibre infill, where demand and social value are highest, such as for health and education reasons for disaster-prone corridors,” the CEO said.

LEO satellite’s technical capabilities had been proven, and customers were willing to adopt satellite services, he said. “However, pricing of LEOsat should be reflective of its lesser technical capabilities when compared to fibre, and in the case of NBN LEO, when compared to Starlink.”

“We know that national education and awareness campaigns will be vital in communicating the real-world value that comes with migrating to fibre and adopting



Brian Maher

higher speed internet,” Maher said.

“As such, we would like to see a national digital readiness program implemented to ensure that families and households — especially in regional and remote communities — have the information, skills, devices and plan settings to benefit from higher speed services.”

Maher said a SIP baseline of 100/20Mbps, paired with a full-fibre mandate to replace legacy technologies, would ensure regional Australians could benefit “as much as their metropolitan counterparts”.

He also revealed that Aussie Broadband had recently surpassed 1m broadband services.

Samira Sarraf

## **Megaport to establish AI inference cloud**

Megaport has announced it will build a globally distributed AI inference cloud, including an on-demand GPU pool as a foundational component.

The company yesterday also revealed the execution of four new AI infrastructure contracts with a combined value of \$458.9m.

“AI inference represents one of the biggest infrastructure opportunities of the next decade,” Megaport CEO Michael Reid said.

“The contracts announced today reflect the accelerating demand for globally distributed AI inference infrastructure. Megaport’s software-provisioned compute, network and storage platform positions us strongly to meet that demand.”

Megaport is undertaking a non-renounceable entitlement offer to raise \$827.3m to help fund the capital expenditure needed to fulfil the contracts and seed the GPU pool.

“The proceeds from the entitlement offer will enable us to fulfil contracted customer demand while building an on-demand GPU pool that creates new opportunities across enterprise and sovereign AI markets globally,” Reid said.

“AI inference is becoming a global infrastructure challenge, not simply a GPU problem. As AI adoption accelerates, organisations need seamless access to GPUs, CPUs, storage and the connectivity that powers them. Megaport is built to deliver it all.”

The customers are US-based technology providers, Megaport said. The contracts required around \$369.5m in incremental capex, primarily for high-performance NVIDIA GPUs, supported by network and storage components, it said.

Staff writer

## **Viasat wants to partner with Aussie telcos on D2D**

Viasat wants to partner with Australian telecommunications providers to deliver direct-to-device services to consumers.

Senior vice president Carlin Charteris said Viasat is bringing new capabilities in satellite direct-to-device connectivity including supporting connected vehicles to Australia, with the service able to solve some of the challenges in delivering services across Australia’s vast landmass. ot.

“Satellite to mobile is going to be a key solution to providing ubiquitous mobile voice services and productivity,” Charteris said during the CommsDay Summit.



“It's going to be low cost. It has to be low cost for mass adoption. We want to have choice for users and operators. We don't have a direct to consumer model or direct to consumer ambition. We want to work with telcos ... and enterprise to enable these capabilities.”

Viasat backs “interoperability between competing solutions and enabling sovereign solutions for the countries. We've heard this globally, in many countries that we've been working with or regulators and government entities, we don't want to have single operator dominance as a result.”

He noted Viasat's partnership with Space 42 on a joint venture called Equatys to D2D services globally. The JV says it will operate as a “lean infrastructure provider using a shared multi-tenant model that reduces redundant investments while delivering cost-efficient capacity to ecosystem participants.”

Charteris also highlighted the capabilities of ViaSat-3 F3 which was launched at the end of April. It is a “a complete rethink in the architecture, the design, the payload, the ground infrastructure, and how we deliver critical services here in Australia.”

While legacy satellites have tens of gateways the Viasat 3 F3 has the equivalent of 300 to 1000 gateways. Another benefit is the flexibility. “We can place that capacity anywhere we want on near real time, reconfigure the satellite again to place capacity somewhere else, so think about emergency services or major disaster having that capability at fingertips,” Charteris said.

Viasat is also bringing to Australia its Space for Good initiative, a STEM competition for university students to empower them to develop insights and understanding in spatial technology. Applications open on 13 July and finals will happen on 8 December.

Samira Sarraf

## **Networks mission-critical for AI: Nokia**

The evolution of AI heavily depends on telecom networks, which have become mission-critical to the technology's performance and economics, according to Nokia managing director for Oceania Adrian Heley.

Speaking at the CommsDay Summit on Wednesday, Heley said Nokia aimed to transform itself into a global connectivity leader for the AI era.

Heley said AI was driving a massive build-out of infrastructure, including data centres, sophisticated compute chips and storage, and increasingly high-performance connectivity.

“What this really means is networks are now mission critical to AI performance and economics,” he said.

“Agentic and physical AI can only be enabled by robust, secure and capable networks. There is no AI evolution without the network... Without networks, AI doesn't become real. It remains an isolated curiosity, a super capable search engine.”

The evolution of AI was reshaping traffic patterns, with AI traffic being sustained, bidirectional, uplink-heavy, more distributed and at times more latency-sensitive, Heley said. It was also driving increasing traffic within the data centres used to process AI workloads, he said.

“There is an explosion of the east-west traffic inside data centres as the IO workloads require constant server-to-server communication across the compute clusters and increasingly between data centres, edge cloud and distributed AI architectures,” he said.

“A single dropped packet or a stalled flow can force the system to roll back to its last checkpoint, resetting hours or even days of work. Congestion can be just as damaging, leaving costly GPU resources idle while they wait for other data or another GPU in the cluster to finish their part of the job. In short, the data centre network is becoming just as critical to AI performance as the GPUs themselves.”

Heley said Nokia referred to this component as the scale-out part of AI networking. The company had invested heavily in technology to enable deployment and help meet rapidly increasing demand, he said. Once AI models were trained they had to be delivered to inference locations, which demanded robust, reliable cloud connectivity and seamless access networks. Without this infrastructure, even the most advanced AI capabilities became inaccessible, Heley said.

Nokia referred to this component as the scale-across part of AI networking.

“Again, Nokia has invested heavily in key enabling technology to support scale across,” he said.

The final component involved the access and distribution network to deliver the results of AI workloads to consumers and businesses, Heley said. Most consumers would get access to AI applications from the internet, he noted.

“Telco network operators are uniquely placed to provide differentiated performance for specific applications of AI to the physical world, responding to real-world stimulus,” he said.

“A much larger share will be executed across a spectrum of cloud environments, on-prem enterprise, metro and edge clouds and centralised hyperscale regions, each interconnected by a high-performance network.”

**NEW STRATEGY:** Heley said Nokia’s new company strategy focused on leveraging its advanced connectivity to meet the demands and opportunities of the AI era.

“We’ve aligned our portfolio on the networking infrastructure that powers the AI supercycle, from data centres to intelligent edge to support the growth in demand among AI and cloud providers. Second, we’re leading the next era of connectivity with AI-native networks, including 6G, pioneering trusted, secure AI-powered networks that make connectivity visible and intelligent.”

This change in strategy was reflected in Nokia’s change of slogan from “connecting people” to “connecting intelligence”, he said.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## **Fletcher says telcos remain central to digital economy after three decades of change**

Former communications minister Paul Fletcher has used his induction into the CommsDay Hall of Fame to reflect on three decades of change in telecommunications, while arguing the sector remains under-recognised for its role as the platform underpinning the digital economy.



Accepting the award in Sydney on Tuesday night, Fletcher said he had first entered the sector in 1996 as a young ministerial adviser before later joining Optus and then moving into federal politics.

"I have been lucky to have an amazing ride in this sector," Fletcher said. "In fact, I got so excited about this sector that I wrote a book about it, *Wired Brown Land*. I am often asked how it sold. My answer is: for a book about telecommunications economics, remarkably well."

Fletcher said he had entered politics hoping to become communications minister and had "the extraordinary privilege" of holding the portfolio when COVID hit.

"Overnight, millions of Australians went to working and studying from home. They really needed good broadband and when this country needed this industry to stand up and deliver, this industry did that," Fletcher said.

"I was so proud then and I am so proud now of what this industry has done for Australia." Fletcher said the sector continued to face important structural issues, including narrow profit margins and the role of over-the-top players.

"Friends, there remain plenty of challenges for this industry: the industry's narrow profit margins, while the over-the-top players are siphoning away all of the cash. That is the real strategic issue," he said.

He also pointed to the continuing extent of mobile coverage gaps across Australia, saying "nearly 70% of our terrestrial land still does not have mobile coverage".

Fletcher said LEO satellites were a "game changer", but added that Australia should ensure national sovereignty was not compromised as that market developed.

"We have seen that happen in other parts of our sector and we should be on guard against handing over power to foreign corporations," he said.

He also linked the growth of artificial intelligence and data centres back to the continued importance of networks.

"Of course, the rise of AI and data centres is a powerful trend, but it does surprise me how much breathless commentary fails to recognise that data centres are useless without networks to connect them," Fletcher said.

"So I think the telco sector is perhaps not getting as much recognition as it should for the fundamental role it plays as the platform over which the entire digital economy thrives."

Fletcher also used the speech to revisit earlier phases of the sector's development, recalling that in 1996 the biggest complaint from rural consumers was dial-up internet speeds of 1.2 kilobits per second.

He joked about earlier industry phenomena including the profitability of SMS, the popularity of the Motorola Razr and predictions that unified messaging would become a major service category.



Paul Fletcher

"I remember that every time I flick from email to LinkedIn, to Slack, to WhatsApp, to iMessage, to Signal, to Telegram, to Facebook, to Instagram. I still have not seen unified messaging," he said.

Fletcher said some issues had changed substantially over 30 years while others had remained familiar.

"Engineers still hate it when you sell off your towers to a special purpose company. Telcos still hate paying billions for spectrum," he said.

He also recalled joining Optus in 2000 and spending a year as head of public affairs "denying that Optus was for sale, before it was announced that it was for sale".

"I guess that is something that does not seem to have changed either," he said.

Fletcher thanked CommsDay and the telecommunications sector, saying he was confident the industry would continue doing "an outstanding job providing the vital services that keep our economy and our society going".

Grahame Lynch

## **Global fibre manufacturing at capacity due to AI build-out**

The AI infrastructure build-out has left global fibre manufacturing capacity at saturation point and driven up prices, according to CommScope SVP for broadband networks Philippe Vanhille.

Speaking at the CommsDay Summit on Wednesday, Vanhille said around 600m kilometres of individual raw fibre would be installed globally this year.

While for the past 15 years growth in demand for fibre had been driven by China, over the next five years the majority of growth was expected to come from North America as data centre construction grew exponentially, he said.

"We're talking about a market that is very much US-driven and very much data centre-driven in the next few years," he said.

"And the market is actually reaching the volume of its historical peak, meaning today the capacity to make fibre in the world is full. We are currently in shortage of optical fibre around the world."

The disparity between supply and demand was also affecting fibre pricing, Vanhille said. In the past six months alone, the price per kilometre of raw fibre had increased by between 100% and 200%, he said.

The industry was investing to increase manufacturing capacity, so it would rebalance at some point, but a scarcity of raw materials and available labour was expected to keep prices higher than usual, Vanhille said.

He added that fibre itself had become a commodity, with almost all manufacturers delivering a good enough product. The difference was in the connectivity systems in which the fibre was used, he said.

"There is an extreme variety of designs, of cost approaches, of quality, of intellectual property, of innovation between the various vendors of those connectivity systems, and these make a big difference," he said. "What makes a difference is where the fibre is put and used in which system in which way."

Vanhille said fibre was a long-term investment and no company invested in the technology expecting a return in just a few years.

“When it's done, it's done, and you don't want to do it again, and it has to last for decades,” he said.

For this reason, it was important to select a supplier that was experienced, stable, loyal and capable, he said.

“The partnership has to last during the good market conditions and the bad market conditions. And when it comes to network construction, it has to work during the construction phase, but also during the maintenance phase. It has to be for years and years, [so] you'd better pick someone that will still be available for you in 20 years,” Vanhille said.

“My conclusion is raw fibre is a commodity, connectivity solutions are not, and the best way to protect a long-term investment like a network is to make it happen with a stable, loyal ecosystem of partners.”

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## **Sateliot touts benefits of 3GPP approach to D2D**

Sateliot chief commercial officer Gianluca Redolfi has described the company as delivering the first “real 5G constellation.”

The Barcelona-based satellite operator has a focus on delivering NB-IoT services and last year became a licensed carrier in Australia.

The way the technology worked was “pretty simple”, Redolfi told the CommsDay Summit.

“You have from one side the telecom operator with the same set-up as it is now. We have our own core as well, so we are connected through the telecom operators through the GSMA standard roaming interconnection, and then on the other side is the IoT sensor, or a phone,” he said.

“You connect to our satellites and then we bring the signal back to the ground segment,” he said.

“So one single SIM can now be dual mode terrestrial and satellite,” Redolfi said.

3GPP standards changed the dynamics of delivering satellite services for IoT devices, he said. “It's much cheaper. It's about 10 times cheaper in terms of modules and 10 times cheaper in terms of service.”

Sateliot had signed roaming agreements in more than 70 countries. Australia was an interesting market because around 60% of the continent was outside the reach of terrestrial networks, he said.

“We can clearly close the gap in all the places where there is no coverage,” he said.

The company established its Australian office in September 2024. In May 2025, the company announced its official entry to the Australian market and said it was preparing to connect more than 300,000 devices. Those deployments represented more than \$15m in recurring annual revenues, it said. Early applications announced by the company included wildlife tracking, livestock monitoring, fleet and asset management, smart farming and environmental data collection.

Samira Sarraf

## Regional Tech Hub head seeks industry backing

Regional Tech Hub general manager Kristen Coggan has urged the telco sector to help fund the organisation's ongoing operations, with federal government funding set to expire. Coggan told the CommsDay Summit that the hub had operated for close to six years, "providing free, independent connectivity advice to people living and working across rural, regional and remote Australia".

Funding would expire on 30 June, she said. "Over the past six years, more than 10 million Australians who live and work in regional, rural and remote Australia have had access to our resources, tools and expert advice," Coggan said.

"In 2025, the Regional Tech Hub was conservatively estimated to have directly assisted over 28,000 regional Australians. Through improved connectivity outcomes and informed decision-making, our team helps people navigate an increasingly complex connectivity landscape.

"Whether it's understanding connectivity options or improving their mobile coverage, exploring satellite services, or identifying the right technology solution for their circumstances, their location and their needs," she said.

Coggan said the team was working out how to keep the organisation operating, with the national team being cut from 14 to 7 from 1 July.

"Our help desk service can continue operating until 30 September at best," she said. "But beyond that, our future remains uncertain."

Rohan Pearce

## Allot flags security opportunity for Australian telcos

Australian telcos are well positioned to offer network-native security to their subscribers amid a worsening threat landscape, according to Allot vice-president of product management Moti Goldshtein.

Cyber security should be "built-in, not bolt-on", he told the CommsDay Summit yesterday.

Goldshtein said a global Allot survey found that two years ago, one in four SMBs had suffered a cyber security incident.

"Now it's one out of three," he said. "I think in the next two years it will be one out of two."

He said the same survey revealed that 84% of SMBs would pay their telco provider for cyber security. While each market was different, small businesses showed a willingness to pay around 15-20% of their connectivity payment for the service, he said.

The current model of security failed because it involved "friction", he said, while the Allot model involved "zero touch" rather than relying on user action and installs.

Goldshtein said Vodafone UK had overnight hit a milestone in its partnership with Allot, making smart security router upgrades available to 900,000 additional broadband subscribers. The telco's Secure Net Home product provided network-level malware protection for up to 128 devices, alongside other services such as content filters.

Staff writer

## **NGMN emphasises network simplification to ease 6G migration pains**

The Next Generation Mobile Networks Alliance has released two operator-driven publications ahead of the 3GPP plenary meeting in Singapore, urging the telecommunications ecosystem to prioritise network simplification, learn from 5G deployment challenges and establish early consensus on 6G architecture to avoid market confusion and unnecessary complexity.

On 6G architecture, the alliance called for a focus on multi-RAT spectrum sharing, or MRSS, as the primary baseline to ensure a smooth and cost-effective migration path.

The publication emphasised further research on the feasibility and performance of MRSS and its continual evolution within 4G-5G architectures, such as moving beyond dynamic spectrum sharing and enhancing support for both frequency division duplexing and time division duplexing spectrum.

NGMN also urged consideration of alternative approaches such as dual connectivity and dual stack solutions, but warned these should “only be pursued if they can tackle well-defined deployment gaps that MRSS cannot address”.

“The transition to 6G will present significant opportunities, but only if the industry prioritises migration paths that build on existing network assets, minimise operational complexity and deliver tangible benefits from the earliest deployment stages,” NGMN Alliance chairman and Orange Group CTO Laurent Leboucher said.

“Dedicating sufficient time to this process is crucial, otherwise risking unnecessary complexity and long-term challenges, limiting the value to operators and end users.”

A second publication on the deployment timeframe for 6G urged minimising migration complexity for operations while allowing sufficient time to develop robust standards that met operator requirements.

NGMN emphasised that large-scale deployments depended on the availability of a fully developed ecosystem that encompassed both network infrastructure and compatible devices.

“Decisions of today around standardisation, including migration options, will shape the entire 6G ecosystem and determine its long-term success with regard to the ability to deliver value to customers,” NGMN CEO Anita Döhler said.

Tony Chan

## **NETCOMM PUSHES SELF-INSTALL FIXED WIRELESS**

NetComm sales director Andrew James and technology director Charlie Warren used the CommsDay Summit to outline the company's work on self-installed outdoor fixed wireless access equipment, arguing that customer premise equipment remained an area where practical engineering could still remove barriers for operators and users. Warren said the traditional indoor “set and forget” model was increasingly challenged by 5G and higher frequency spectrum, with C-band signals heavily attenuated by glass, brick, concrete and other building materials. NetComm's latest work included wireless power and data transfer through glass, a detachable outdoor unit using Gecko tape and antenna designs intended to give near-180 degree coverage without a

professional installation. James said the company was working with tier one carriers globally and saw the approach as relevant to fixed wireless, home deployment and fibre extension use cases.

### **CLOUDRAN.AI SEES AI ROLE IN PRIVATE 5G DEPLOYMENT**

CloudRAN.ai managing director Bai Wei told the CommsDay Summit the Singapore-based private network vendor was using artificial intelligence to simplify the planning, deployment and operation of enterprise 4G and 5G networks. Bai said enterprise customers often struggled with basic questions around why they should use private 5G, how many radios they needed and what performance they could expect, requiring vendors to repeatedly explain telecoms concepts outside their own industry. The company's AI tools were being used to generate network plans, heat maps and customer reports, while an AI support layer was being trained on specifications, troubleshooting documents and telecom theory to assist with configuration and operations. Bai cited sports broadcasting, aquaculture and mining deployments as examples, including the use of edge AI to reduce video bandwidth requirements from offshore fish farms and private 5G to support mining safety and autonomous vehicle applications.

### **HPE JUNIPER OUTLINES SELF-DRIVING DATA CENTRE PUSH**

HPE Networking senior director for service provider APJ Garry Turner told the CommsDay Summit the combined HPE and Juniper portfolio was being positioned around more autonomous, self-learning networks for artificial intelligence data centres and service provider infrastructure. Turner said AI and machine learning workloads were changing data centre design requirements, with large GPU clusters creating much greater east-west traffic and pushing beyond traditional leaf-spine architectures. He said HPE Juniper was using streaming telemetry, AI operations, digital twins and simulation to reduce human error, validate network designs before deployment and support automated change management rather than live manual configuration. Turner said the approach was intended to reduce travel tickets, accelerate upgrades and support multi-terabit routing and switching requirements as operators built infrastructure for AI workloads.

### **BLUE PLANET: AI TO RECAST OSS**

Blue Planet senior solutions architect Mitchell Stafford said artificial intelligence would redefine operational support systems from separate tools into an intelligence layer able to observe networks, understand context and support increasingly closed-loop action. Stafford told the CommsDay Summit that multi-vendor, multi-domain and software-driven networks were outgrowing manual processes and legacy OSS environments. He said those systems risked becoming the bottleneck between network investment and outcomes such as faster activation, faster fault resolution, fewer manual tickets and better capacity use. Stafford said "invisible OSS" would make operational complexity less visible to users and operators, supported by shared context, digital twins, governance, explainability and policy controls. Autonomy, he said, would come through gradual, governed removal of operational bottlenecks.



## **AMAZON LEO SIGNS PULSAR FOR MARITIME SECTOR**

Amazon Leo has signed marine communications specialist Pulsar as an authorised reseller. Pulsar will integrate Amazon Leo's low earth orbit constellation into its portfolio of communications and digital services for commercial maritime industries. Pulsar will offer Amazon Leo Pro and Ultra antennas, with the latter delivering up to 1Gbps downlinks and 400Mbps uplinks.

## **MOTOROLA BUYS ANTI-DRONE TECH DEVELOPER**

Motorola Solutions has purchased counter-drone systems developer D-Fend in a deal valued at US\$1.5b. D-Fend's solution uses "advanced non-kinetic RF cyber-takeover technology" to mitigate threats from rogue drones while allowing authorised drones to continue operations. The transaction is expected to close in the fourth quarter of 2026, subject to required regulatory approvals and satisfaction of other customary closing conditions.

## **VODAFONE, GEELY IN CONNECTED CAR PARTNERSHIP**

Vodafone Business and Geely Technology Europe, the European research and development arm of China's Geely Auto Group, have expanded a partnership to integrate connected-car solutions into the automaker's vehicle architecture and operations. The collaboration will develop a range of capabilities, including in-car internet to power vehicle diagnostics and over-the-air software upgrades; cloud connectivity for vehicles; and digital services such as dynamic EV charging planning and 3D lane guidance. The firms said more than 98% of new passenger vehicles sold were expected to be connected by 2030.

## **SATELLITE CONVERGENCE SHOULD BE TREATED AS A PRODUCT OPPORTUNITY**

Telcos should treat satellite-terrestrial convergence as more than backup connectivity and instead use it to improve customer experience and develop new revenue streams, Netcracker master solutions engineer Anton Petrov told the CommsDay Summit. Petrov said connectivity was increasingly "table stakes" and customers expected self-service control, service transparency and on-demand functionality. He said Netcracker had supported operators and satellite providers globally in developing new satellite-enabled products. Petrov said customers increasingly valued dashboards, transparent service-level agreement monitoring and control over their own services, citing one Canadian operator that lost a large government customer because a smaller rival offered better service visibility. He said AI was helping telcos shorten network planning from weeks to days and product launches from months to weeks.

## **INCOGNITO: TELCOS MUST MAKE TRUST OPERATIONAL**

Telcos need to treat trust as an operational discipline rather than a brand claim, Incognito head of global presales Ladi Astrab told the CommsDay Summit. Astrab said customers no longer judged broadband service only on coverage, speed, price and brand, but increasingly on reputation and whether providers could anticipate and resolve issues before they affected the user. He said operators should aim for the same

frictionless experience as hospitality brands, where customer preferences are known and the customer does not have to repeat themselves. Astrab said customers did not care about network silos, device acronyms or back-end systems, but only whether the service worked. He said device management and visibility inside the customer premises were now critical, while AI was not a “silver bullet” and depended on good, reliable, real-time data. “Reputation is delivered, not declared,” he said.

## SPECIAL REPORT

### Panel calls for national telco vision and root-and-branch regulatory review

Australia needs a national telecommunications vision rather than a piecemeal approach to policy across networks, AI, data centres and energy, a CommsDay Summit panel has heard.

Long Street Advisors CEO Mohammad Chowdhury said Australia was an advanced economy that was embracing AI and welcoming data centre investment, but lacked an integrated view of what its telecommunications sector should become.

“We are an advanced economy, we are embracing AI, we are welcoming data centre investment. There are lots of things happening, but I find it is all very piecemeal and just looking three months ahead,” Chowdhury told the Summit’s closing great debate.

“I do not believe there is a proper vision and I do not believe the government has taken the opportunity to figure out what that vision actually is,” he said.

Chowdhury said Australia compared unfavourably with other major economies that had developed clearer long-term strategies for telecommunications and digital infrastructure.

“I feel as though Australia as an OECD economy sorely lacks this. Other countries have this: Singapore, the US, the European Union, China and others. I think that is really missing from this country’s fabric,” he said.

**THE FULL STACK:** His comments were backed by NEXTDC head of colocation Chris Losco, who said government needed to stop viewing policy through separate horizontal categories and instead consider the entire technology stack.

Losco said there were currently telco regulations, data centre regulations and energy regulations, but the growth of AI meant those frameworks could no longer be treated as separate policy domains.

“They need to look at it vertically, at the entire stack, all the way from AI and software through to energy, and look at it differently,” he said.

Losco said geography was already set, but policy was not. He said the question was



From L to R: MC Joe Hildebrand, TM Forum EVP, AI Guy Lupo, NEXTDC head of colocation Chris Losco, Long Street Advisors CEO Mohammad Chowdhury, IAA CEO Narelle Clark

how government could foster an environment in which the AI, data centre, energy and communications ecosystem could develop over time.

He also urged the communications minister to engage directly with the energy minister on the need to accelerate investment in transmission networks, saying additional power capacity would be critical to meeting AI and data centre demand.

**ROOT-AND-BRANCH REVIEW:** The panel's policy comments came as Internet Association of Australia CEO Narelle Clark called for a "constructive, sensible, consolidated root-and-branch review of the telco sector and regulation."

Asked what she would tell the communications minister if given one minute, Clark said: "Frankly, I would just like the minister to talk to us."

Clark said she did not expect any government to take on serious policy reform easily, given the current political environment.

"I am not expecting, given the way things have happened over the last few years and the fact that we are in a peak disgruntlement, any government of any flavour to take on serious policy reform. It is just too hard. It is too easy to tear it down and too easy to tear it apart," she said.

But she said the current regulatory framework was increasingly difficult for industry to navigate.

"We have too many regulations slapped on top of each other, with competing objectives and not enough proper thought, not enough consultation with industry to do things properly," Clark said.

Her comments followed broader industry concern across the Summit about expanding obligations on carriers, service providers and infrastructure operators, including new consumer, outage, resilience, security and digital platform-related requirements.

**TRAFFIC FORECASTS KEEP BEING OVERTAKEN:** Clark said the underlying pressures on internet infrastructure were not new, but demand shocks had repeatedly overtaken forecasts. She recalled earlier debates over the level of international bandwidth needed in Australia, saying assumptions about customer demand often reflected network bottlenecks rather than actual user requirements.

"If you take the total amount of international bandwidth we have right now and divide it by the number of consumers, guess what? That is 44 kilobits per second. That is why they only need 44 kilobits per second: because that is all we have on that bottleneck," she said, referring to earlier bandwidth planning debates.

Clark said internet traffic had since been driven by successive waves of demand, including email, video, YouTube, social media, TikTok and now AI.

"When we finally think, we have got it now, we can dimension the networks and know how much we need, something comes along," she said.

She said AI would add to the strain, both through traffic demand and through the proliferation of poorly secured connected devices and software.

"We have now got this huge barrage of stuff that is not secured. It has not been created with much discipline in the software space and that was done by humans. Now we have AI tools to accelerate this once more again. I think we are in for an even wilder ride now," she said.

**MOBILE MONETISATION PRESSURE:** The discussion also linked the need for a clearer telecommunications vision to the industry's ability to fund future mobile network investment.

Chowdhury said the single largest strategic issue for mobile operators globally was monetisation, rather than technology, capital or regulation alone.

He said the mobile sector faced weak revenue growth at the same time as it was expected to invest heavily in 5G standalone, 6G, direct-to-device satellite, regional coverage, AI traffic and network resilience.

Citing GSMA forecasts, he said mobile operators globally were expected to achieve only around 1% average revenue per user growth year on year to 2030, while the industry would need to invest more than \$1 trillion in new networks.

He said that meant a very large share of future revenue growth would need to be spent on capital investment.

"That does not add up," he said.

Chowdhury said mobile operators needed new sources of growth, including network APIs, enterprise services, private networks, internet of things and multi-tenant 5G environments such as airports and shopping centres.

But he said those opportunities would require different commercial models and updated billing and operational support systems.

"At the moment it is very easy to say an operator needs to monetise its network better. But part of the problem is that most operators do not actually have a billing or charging system by which they could monetise the network better and that itself is a bit of a journey," he said.

**AI WORKING WHERE THE DATA WORKS:** TM Forum executive vice president, AI Guy Lupo said AI was already delivering measurable gains in telco operations, but warned against overstating the sector's progress towards full autonomy.

Lupo said AI was working best where data was structured, maintained and capable of being consumed by AI systems as a data product. He pointed to fault management and churn reduction as areas where telcos were seeing results.

"In fault management, specifically at scale, you will see double-digit improvement, like 33% in mean time to repair and almost 15% reduction in tickets in many telcos worldwide that have taken the initiative to go into fault management," he said.

He said customer churn was also seeing double-digit improvement where telcos had the right data structures in place.

But Lupo said the promise of fully autonomous networks remained overhyped.

"There are a lot of people claiming autonomy, but they are actually automating on



steroids. That is a real issue,” he said.

“Automation on steroids has not touched the operating model. Fundamental changes are required in autonomous level four to actually be autonomous.”

Lupo said the key barrier was trust, arguing that companies could not simply claim trustworthy AI systems.

“Trust in the age of AI can no longer be claimed. It must be demonstrated,” he said.

**SOVEREIGNTY BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE:** Lupo said the same principle should apply to AI sovereignty. He argued that the industry was wrongly equating sovereignty with infrastructure location, when the more important issue was operational trust and the ability to demonstrate how systems behaved at runtime.

“The hype is not sovereignty. It is actually sovereignty equals infrastructure,” he said. “Sovereignty is a runtime problem.”

He said some governments and companies were already considering mechanisms akin to “passports” or “birth certificates” for AI agents, requiring systems to demonstrate where they came from, what they could do and what permissions they had.

Chowdhury also cautioned against equating sovereignty solely with onshore infrastructure.

“There is a big misunderstanding about sovereignty at the moment, which is that it needs to be onshore,” he said.

He said that did not mean telecommunications capability was irrelevant to sovereignty. On the contrary, he argued that a sustainable domestic telecommunications sector was part of a nation’s sovereign capability.

“One reason why the telecommunications industry needs to be sustainable in the country is because I think it is important for a country’s sovereignty to have a telecoms industry that is capable,” he said.

**DATA CENTRE DEMAND AND SECURITY CONCERNS:** Losco said sovereignty had become a major driver of demand among large enterprise and government data centre customers. “Our largest enterprise and government customers are paranoid about sovereignty. It drives a lot of conversations and a lot of value for them,” he said.

He said Australia’s geography, rule of law, Five Eyes status, political stability, energy position and renewables potential made it attractive to global AI companies and hyperscalers seeking infrastructure in the region.

But Clark struck a more pessimistic note on whether sovereignty could be secured in practice, saying AI-enabled security tooling and zero-day exploitation meant the “horse has bolted” on many assumptions about data protection.

“I think this whole concept of sovereignty is gone,” she said.

Despite that warning, Lupo said telcos had an immediate opportunity to commercialise services that gave customers more control over data, privacy and AI workloads.

He said the industry had long sold VPNs, VLANs, VRFs and SD-WAN services, and could extend those capabilities into what he called “AI VPNs” or “AI WANs”.

“The money is there and the need is there,” he said.



## 10 YEARS AGO IN COMMSDAY

Australia's mobile carriers, infrastructure vendors with a local presence, and a number of handset makers have banded together to establish a dedicated, cooperative 5G group under the banner of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association. The idea is to get work underway on local technical, regulatory and policy settings for 5G, to draw on related international developments and discussions and to ensure that Australia, in turn, has a seat at the table in those talks.

Telstra has revealed a new start-up joint venture with the National Australia Bank, aimed specifically at SMBs: a new digital marketplace to give small businesses an online forum to network, trade, or exchange services. The move comes as Australia's major telcos shape up for a renewed battle for market share in the SMB space.

UK-based consultancy Analysys Mason has backed NBN's methodology and processes for determining which type of network it will deploy in particular geographical areas as well as the initial design of its FTTN, FTTB and HFC networks. The independent review was provided to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to support NBN's application for a variation of its Special Access Undertaking.

Cloud-based building services provider Urbanise is one of a number of Victorian ICT firms that have announced deals at this week's Communi-cAsia event in Singapore. As well as partnering with a number of global companies in the property and facility management sectors, the Melbourne-headquartered Urbanise announced that it will use Singapore as its base for regional expansion.

## LATEST SHARE PRICES

Company name	Change (%)	Last price	Change	Volume	Market cap
5G Networks Limited	0.00%	0.0930	0.0000	284,658	25.12M
Pentanet Limited	0.00%	0.0180	0.0000	15,000	7.797M
Aussie Broadband Limited	+3.44%	5.72	+0.19	1.36M	1.678B
Comms Group Limited	-2.67%	0.0730	-0.0020	230,815	39.914M
Chorus Limited	-0.76%	7.83	-0.06	378,420	3.397B
Macquarie Technology Group Limited	+1.96%	77.60	+1.49	98,134	2B
Megaport Limited	0.00%	16.61	0.00	1.885M	3.066B
NEXTDC Limited	+4.07%	16.37	+0.64	4.292M	11.829B
Superloop Limited	+0.28%	3.5900	+0.0100	4.116M	1.848B
Spark New Zealand Limited	-0.64%	1.5550	-0.0100	2.125M	2.939B
Swoop Holdings Limited	0.00%	0.0930	0.0000	446,863	28.929M
Telstra Group Limited	-0.78%	5.12	-0.04	21.535M	57.29B
TPG Telecom Limited	-0.54%	3.6800	-0.0200	3.475M	7.224B

## About Communications Day (including Space & Satellite AU & The Line New Zealand)

Communications Day is the telecommunications news bible of ANZ. Published daily since August 1994, CommsDay is expertly written and edited by a team of industry writers with a combined 80 years experience in telecoms across Australia, NZ, Asia, the United States and Europe. CommsDay is available by subscription only and read by up to 10,000 industry executives as well as policymakers and parliamentarians every week day. Around 90% of our readers are in Australia, 5% in New Zealand and the remainder across the rest of the world including Singapore, the United States and the United Kingdom.

### PUBLISHED BY DECISIVE PUBLISHING

**Mail: PO Box 490 Milsons**

**Point NSW 1565**

**Website: [www.commsday.com](http://www.commsday.com)**

THIS PUBLICATION IS COPYRIGHT AND ITS CONTENT CANNOT BE REPRODUCED, UPLOADED TO AN AI PLATFORM OR DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT OUR EXPRESS PERMISSION. OFFENDERS CAN BE PROSECUTED. ALL RIGHTS WILL BE EXERCISED.

### Contacting CommsDay

Editorial director: Grahame Lynch:  
[grahamelynch@commsdaymail.com](mailto:grahamelynch@commsdaymail.com)  
 Managing editor: Rohan Pearce:  
[rohan@commsdaymail.com](mailto:rohan@commsdaymail.com)  
 Editor at large: Tony Chan,  
[tony@commsdaymail.com](mailto:tony@commsdaymail.com)

**CEO & Founder: Grahame Lynch**  
[Grahamelynch@commsdaymail.com](mailto:Grahamelynch@commsdaymail.com)

### Subscriptions and conference bookings:

Vicky Vo, [vicky@commsdaymail.com](mailto:vicky@commsdaymail.com)  
**CommsDay Summit/Congress/Edisons sponsorship and co-ordination:**  
 Veronica Kennedy-Good,  
[veronica@mindsharevents.com.au](mailto:veronica@mindsharevents.com.au)

DOLLAR REFERENCES IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE TO AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. WE REFERENCE DOLLARS AS AUSTRALIAN IN ARTICLES DEALING WITH MULTINATIONAL OR MULTICURRENCY TOPICS.

**COPYRIGHT REMINDER:** A CommsDay subscription licenses a specified number of users within your organisation to receive and read the daily PDF, in line with the terms of your subscription. It does not permit distribution outside your organisation, including via external channels or public platforms such as LinkedIn. Nor does it permit uploading CommsDay content to AI or cloud-based services for summarisation, interpretation, republication or training purposes. Such use may constitute a breach of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Civil and criminal penalties may apply, including substantial fines and custodial sentences. If in doubt, please contact us.