

QCN Fibre continues to drive competition in Queensland – connecting to all 22 NBN Pols with Ciena

QCN Fibre continues to build coverage, capacity, and competition in Queensland. The organisation announced today that it can provide backhaul to all Queensland NBN Points of Interface (PoI).

QCN Fibre's initial work program involved connecting its existing fibre network to six regional NBN Pols in Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, and Cairns.

"Our launch strategy was to activate services to these key regional centres by mid-2020. We have achieved that," said QCN Fibre's Chief Executive Officer, Derek Merdith. "Now, we continue to improve Coverage, Capacity and Competition throughout Queensland, through connecting to all 22 NBN Pols."

"As a small and dynamic organisation, we can quickly adapt our strategies to meet our customers' needs. When we inspected the more than 12,000km of fibre we inherited from our parent companies, Energy Queensland and Powerlink, and considered current market conditions, connecting to all 22 Pols became both technically achievable and a competitive necessity."

"Today, there are only two primary backhaul providers to the six regional Pols. Whilst NBN provides some competition, small ISPs must ultimately rely on a limited range of suppliers for backhaul services from the PoI to Brisbane. Regional backhaul currently costs several times that of metropolitan backhaul."

"QCN Fibre's NBN backhaul strategy is critical in supporting local businesses across regional Queensland. Through lowering backhaul prices, our customers should be able to lower the cost of NBN business grade services to our regions. Levelling the playing field means that NBN Internet Service Providers can compete with the national carriers," Merdith said.

QCN Fibre is rolling out Ciena's (NYSE: CIEN) Waveserver Ai compact interconnect platform powered with programmable 400G coherent optics across its edge environment. Leveraging its DWDM infrastructure, QCN Fibre is also deploying Ciena's MEF 3.0 certified 5170 Platform.

QCN Fibre will offer 1GbE, 10GbE and 100GbE NBN backhaul options. QCN Fibre are planning to provide VNNI backhaul services to further assist smaller local ISPs scale and grow and minimise the need to invest in expensive infrastructure.

"Ciena enables QCN to transform its network to meet new dynamic requirements for connectivity, especially in remote and rural areas across Queensland," said Matt Vesperman, Managing Director, Australia & New Zealand, Ciena. "With increased capacity delivered by Ciena, QCN is building a more efficient, reliable and scalable network."

Until recently, regional Queensland has been challenged with telecommunications costs that are significantly higher than metropolitan charges. This has included limited difference between prices offered by major providers, including NBN, and the high cost of backhaul.

NBN's announcement that Enterprise Ethernet pricing will be reduced in some regional areas goes some way to reducing the digital divide, but the reductions are not across the whole of Queensland.

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"We can't resolve NBN's regional pricing challenge, but we can improve the backhaul commercials for our customers," said CEO Derek Merdith.

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About QCN Fibre

Through delivering real solutions of improved telecommunications Coverage, Capacity and Competition, QCN Fibre enables Queenslanders to take advantage of their exceptional opportunities in the emerging economy.

QCN Fibre was born from the Advance Queensland Initiative, with the express goal to 'Back our Regions to Compete Globally'. We are jointly owned by Powerlink and Energy Queensland, whose network we utilise. We provide Internet & Retail Service Providers increased data capacity through unlocking unused space on these established state of the art, stable, optical networks.

Our network spans more than 12,000 kilometres of optical fibre stretching West from Brisbane to Toowoomba and beyond, and North through regional townships up to Cairns. Our operations improve regional connectivity through increasing competition and supporting new investment and jobs in regional Queensland.