

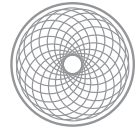
National Broadband Network

Facilitating immediate economical and consumer benefits by structuring the business section of the proposal.

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Executive Summary

Objective

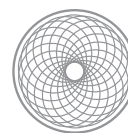
Provide a list of practical suggestions of facilitating immediate consumer and economical benefits, and provide a structured outline that allows consumers to understand the immediate benefits of the FTN network, not just the benefits of speed increase.

This report also, lists out of the basic current failings and costs that are incurred by the current business structure faced by Telcos and Computer/IT companies.

However the final point made in this report, is that FTN network for the NBN is a new start to a new era of Technology. Consumers do not want any part of any hassles or delays or anything problematic that is currently plagued our current network. If consumers don't feel positive about the new network, then it would be more difficult to implement this project.

List of Recommendations

- Certifications for local members skilled in IT, to provide onsite support and a dedicated line for the certified to call for support. The reimbursements of these certified can be made in terms of limited tax-cuts.
- Transparency of information
- Bandwidth reservation for Australian Services



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Certifications for a community base IT support

Existing issue and cost drivers of Telecommunication companies

The most frequently complained issue faced by many Australians whom are not technical, is the reliance of technical phone support overseas. For example Optus uses India as their main base for any issues related to ADSL, as a result they can hire more technical staff and the wait time is reduced. But, a lot of customers of Optus believes the service quality is low.

On the other hand, iiNet's technical support is considered as Australia's best. Their support is local and their staff are very competent and very clear in their communication to the customers. But the wait time to reach them is often over 45 minutes.

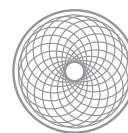
There is no perfect way to handle Australian customers, in-fact any model that involves non-technical consumers calling for technical support will result in the service being a major cost driver.

The fact is, most consumers are not technical and complaining over the phone extends the call and accountants would factor this additional time in and count it as additional costs. Should a company increase it's staff, the increase of costs for hiring new staff will eventually be passed down to consumers and/or taken out of government funding.

For the NBN using FBT network be successful, the cost drivers and frustrations of consumers must be addressed. Otherwise public opinion will be **erosive** on the project as a whole.

If this is not factored in, naturally Telstra and Optus will factor these costs in as part of hidden or miscellaneous, thus increasing costs for both consumers and the Government.

On the other hand, should the Government address consumer issues in the NBN, by providing even very basic outlines to plans of improving consumer experience, a **Synergetic** process may emerge and hence promote the FBT network to work more fluidly within Australia.



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Onsite Technical Support

The premium technical support service available currently are onsite technicians that charge over \$150 per hour. The ugliness of this structure, though it's a good service but it is often used by consumers as an estimate of compensating for the down time they've experienced by their ISP. This obviously opens up more complexity for Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) when consumers are threatening to report or sue the ISP.

Again the resources allocated for the ISP to provide service to handle these cases isn't small. And a recent report shows that consumer complaints are on the rise.

Certification Program

The Certification Program is aimed at anyone already in the IT field, to work within the community to support the non-technical personnel and help ISPs diagnose issues. The Certification Program will run for a limited number of years until the FTN is completed. By then there could possibly be another project which the certification project if successful can be rolled over.

So whats in it for the Certified?

Being in the IT industry myself, I'm clearly not interested in being paid the extra amount because I know it's going to be taxed. It's certainly a negative perception.

Rather the reimbursements should be made in the form of tax-cuts. For a certified to receive those tax-cuts, they need to preform and meet certain levels of service. Obviously the minimum levels cannot be too high, because most work large number of hours during the week and they need to rest.

The tax-cuts may also apply to companies, which may want to encourage their small IT department to work within a given community to receive their tax-cut.

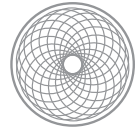
Providing these tax cuts would also attract more IT professionals into Australia, and likewise companies.

Certification: Selection of IT personnel

The selection of IT personnel must also be strict. It's obvious, because the certified needs to enter the house to fix the connection/computer that there are ethical guidelines to ensure the safety of both the certified and the consumer.

The IT personnel also needs to be working in a company, with a position that is directly related to the field of Information Technology.

Name of report



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That condition is necessary, because the IT industry changes very rapidly and should the IT personnel be not familiar with the current state of the art technology, this would lead to complications of return visits, missed appointments or arguments. It's expected that the personnel be in a reputable position in his IT field.

It's expected that this service will require background checks on both the certified and the personnel they're visiting. It is expected that most consumers will fit the category that they are safe and not linked to any violence or crimes. Should a person with such a history require a service, the certified may be escorted with a Police Officer to the premises, but these people would be last on the list that the certified needs to help out.

Certification Course

The certification course is a difficult course to cover. The difficulty is to generate interest within the IT industry as being a challenge and a worthy certification to complete. The course should naturally be too difficult for un-graduated students or High-school students.

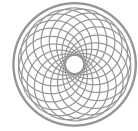
The course also has a pass grade of 75%.

The coverage of the course also expects the participants to be competent in Mathematics. Hence when dealing with bottlenecks or speed issue with the internet connection. Should Fiber to the Home (FTTH) ever be introduced at any stage in the future, the certified should be able to understand why bending the optical fiber would slow the internet connection down 30% and not coaxial or copper cables.

A lot of technician tools would also be taught within the course, which would help diagnose any major faults and hence speed up the repair process.

The main benefit of the course to any particular company, is if there is an fault in the line, their IT staff are not limited to relying on an ISP to find the fault and repair it. Rather, the IT Staff would have the necessary equipment ready to diagnose the issue and report straight to the ISP and have the repair made, should the repair be beyond their scope.

The information on the status of the network will feed through to the ISP as well as the government body to analyse the current issues of the network. Most consumers already expect issues with anything related to technology. Rather than keeping silent, it's better to keep the consumers informed on the current active status.



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Modular Design of the FTN network

Modularity of the FTN network will allow a better understanding to consumers and the certified. It also allows upgrading the network for the future a lot easier. Part of the modularity, is the active information it provides. For example, if there is a bottleneck, experienced in a particular street and it's caused by an individual illegally participating in a bit-torrent seeding operation. Then identifying the problem is a lot easier and would put consumers at ease at the current scenario.

Tiered access of information.

Tiered access is about providing relevant information to consumers on the current status of a network. Whilst more detailed information would be accessed by the certified. And moving up the level will have the ISP's operations which is only assessable by the ISP and/or government regulator.

Specific Phone line for Higher level Technical Support.

The separation of the standard consumer technical support line with the specialist line would assist the Certified to reach for support quicker. As mentioned in the opening statement, most of the wait times for technical support are customer complaints. Even though it's an irrelevant place for customers to lodge complaints, however consumers prefer to vent frustration over the phone to someone whom they perceive is weaker than they are.

Having the separation will mean that, the technical support over the phones will have the power to terminate the call on angry customers should they fail to provide their certification license number. It will reduce costs and time spent on the phones.

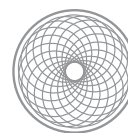
Public Communication

By now the consumer expectation for internet is mixed, which should bring some advantages to the way the NBN should be proclaimed to the wider community.

The expectation that everything will run fine from set go, is clearly a poor expectation. Rather being upfront about the installation of FTN networks will provide more of a realistic expectation.

Conclusion

Though FTN may seem highly irrelevant to customer service, but taking to account that FTN has very little relevance now for customers. It's important to create a sense of relevancy and improvement to the current services now. By doing so, Synergy will produce more prosperous outcomes and the lack of reluctancy to take up the service or any additional services offered by FTN.



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Bandwidth Reservation

Summary

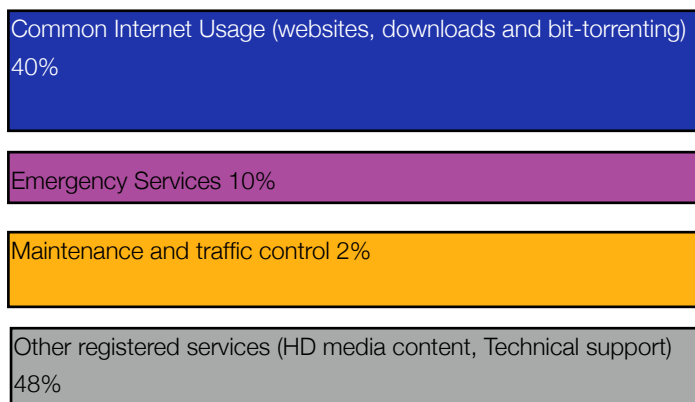
FTN will no doubt provide a higher bandwidth, but control of the bandwidth is just as important for quality of service than just providing the bandwidth hike to all users. Should one particular user be a Bit-Torrent seeder that illegally seeds thousands of movies, then it's the bandwidth will be limited to everyone else on the Node and hence the upgrade to FTN is pointless. Control of the bandwidth is much like our current traffic system in all the CBDs, were good planning and infrastructure leads to a more fluid flow of traffic.

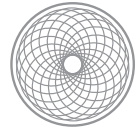
Entry into HD and quality Registered services

As seen from the MacWorld held by Apple, it's an emerging sign from Apple and other players such as TIVO and Microsoft Live to Stream High Definition Content to a household component. Whether it'd be a HD box, appleTv or an xBox 360, the content drive is there. Out of the three companies, Apple currently allows HD rented movies to be downloaded to a computer.

It's an emerging market that needs to be addressed, should venture capitalists (VC) enter into Australia from the US, they need to be sure that there is enough capacity from the infrastructure to support their business should it be in media or IT.

If the cost of HD content be too expensive, it's clear that most consumers will not have the money to purchase additional services offered by startup companies funded by VCs. In fact, as mentioned previously, should the public perception for this FTN network be negative, then it's going to affect entrepreneurs to be more reluctant of the network as a whole.

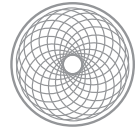




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Noted in the graph above, is Other registered services. The section “Other” registered services is a section of the bandwidth that is specially allocated for Australian Companies that are Registered and Audited. By doing this, it will ensure that Investment will remain local and not off shore. It will also mean that spam and annoying ads will not congest the network and hence not be any arguing tool by the user that their internet quota is used up by pop-ups from elsewhere.

Technical support may also be done over the internet, with VPN for both Windows, Linux and Mac OS X operating systems as a possibility, rather than rely on onsite or phone technical support.



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Concluding statement

By providing the recommendations below as part of the infrastructure of the NBN's FTN,

- Certifications for local members skilled in IT, to provide onsite support and a dedicated line for the certified to call for support. The reimbursements of these certified can be made in terms of limited tax-cuts.
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The rollout of the services becomes more relevant to the standard Australian, and hence provides a new level of co-operation for the community of Australia.

It's obvious that the listed recommendations are not implemented elsewhere in the world. However if these were implemented, we would be the world's first to do so. And we can also use the certification skill set as an exportable skill set to the rest of the world.