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Media Release

16 October 2012

NBN selects Roma for new satellite centre

Darling Downs facility to help bridge Australia's broadband divide

Roma in Queensland's western Darling Downs has been selected as the location for a satellite ground station that will play a crucial role in providing Australians in isolated areas with access to fast broadband.

The facility will be an essential transmission centre to deliver services over the National Broadband Network to remote communities such as Winton, Bedourie, Burketown and the Torres Strait Islands.

NBN Co plans to construct a single-storey building with two 13.5-metre diameter satellite dishes on a site on Kimbler Road, approximately four kilometres east of Roma.

It should also provide a boost to the local economy when construction begins next year. An estimated 20-30 construction workers will be required to build the facility, which is expected to up and running by 2015.

Welcoming news of the investment in the region, Mayor of Maranoa Regional Council, Cr Robert Loughnan, said: "Roma has experienced a great deal of progress and development over the years. This initiative should help bring south west Queensland into the 21st Century. 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."

Councillor Loughnan added that the development application (DA) will be required to go through the usual planning approvals process and be properly considered by Council for compliance with planning requirements.

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

The NBN's Interim Satellite Service is already delivering reliable, high-speed broadband with wholesale download speeds of up to 6 Mbps* to more than 10,000 premises across Australia.

The satellite ground station at Roma is one of 10 such facilities nationwide that will support the NBN Co'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.*

Matt Dawson, NBN Co's Program Director, Satellites, said: "Roma is ideally situated to play a central role in delivering better broadband to the outback. It has the ideal climate and is close to reliable power and other infrastructure including the NBN's core fibre transit network– the main fibre transmission lines linking towns and our exchanges."

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Notes to Editors

- 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 Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Carnarvon in WA, Wolumla and Bourke in NSW, Ceduna in SA, and Geeveston in Tasmania.
- The full eligibility criteria for NBN Co's Interim Satellite Service is available 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.