

Lightning quick to expand service

EXCLUSIVE

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Fixed-wireless internet provider Lightning Broadband is branching out nationally, with its promise of ultra-high speeds proving to be a hit with luxury residential developers.

Having already signed up 24 sizeable residential developments in Melbourne, Lightning has now signed up sites in Sydney and is on track to win business in Brisbane and Perth.

Lightning pitches itself to the market as an alternative to the National Broadband Network and has specifically targeted areas still waiting for the network to arrive. However, Lightning chief executive Jeremy Rich said that even in areas where the NBN was active, there were users that were not sold on the network's capabilities or were wary of the complicated installation process.

"We have been targeting property developers," Mr Rich said.

"The NBN is not giving great outcomes in terms of speed and customer experience and this is a market that's actively looking for alternatives. In addition to that, we have been doing a lot of work with small-to-medium businesses, many of whom can't afford the enterprise-grade services offered on the NBN."

For many small businesses reliant on residential NBN services, the lack of robust upload speeds is another major pain point and it's an area that wireless providers such as Lightning are looking to capitalise on.

The company uses microwave technology to connect homes and businesses, offering download and upload speeds of 100 megabits per second. The microwave receivers are located atop tall buildings and are connected to



Rich

fibre links installed by Lightning, which buys bandwidth from tier-one telcos.

Business users can also sign up to a dedicated gigabit (1000 Mbps) service and the company also offers 500Mbps symmetrical services into apartment buildings.

Fixed-wireless services like those provided by Lightning can be limited by topography and issues like line of sight. However, Mr Rich said they could play an important role in meeting the needs of inner-city residential and business users.

"We save property developers a lot of money compared to other alternatives, give them reliable high speeds and set up their infrastructure for the next couple of decades," Mr Rich said.

With a number of other niche wireless operators in the market such as Uniti and Spirit Telecom making waves, Mr Rich said people were starting to pay increased attention to boutique internet providers that were independent to the NBN.

"Almost all of our business so far has come from word of mouth. We haven't done much marketing and ... we can't match the bigger players on that front," he said.

"So for us it's all about delivering the service that we promise."

Lightning's 100Mbps plan for residential customers starts at \$120 a month, with the 50Mbps plan priced at \$95 a month.