



MEDIA RELEASE

Vodafone makes its next move on 4G

Will reach 95 per cent of Australia's metropolitan population by end of 2014

Vodafone today unveiled plans to significantly boost more than 1.5 million Vodafone customers' 4G network coverage using its low-band 850MHz spectrum holding.

The company said the re-allocation of its existing 850MHz spectrum, known as "re-farming", meant Vodafone's 4G coverage will reach 95% of Australia's metropolitan population by the end of 2014.

Vodafone 4G customers will immediately benefit from the switchover without having to make any changes to their handsets, settings or plans. The majority of available 4G smartphones and tablets are designed to work on the 850MHz spectrum Vodafone plans to use.

Chief Technology Officer Benoit Hanssen says by comparison there are currently only a few in-market handsets that can be used on the 700MHz band, which was acquired by Telstra and Optus in last year's ACMA spectrum auctions.

"Australian smartphone customers already have handsets that will work on Vodafone's low-band 4G 850MHz network. However, nearly all smartphones that have been sold since the introduction of 4G in Australia do not support the APT-700MHz spectrum. Customers on other networks will therefore require a new device in order to experience low-band 4G services," said Mr Hanssen.

Low-band spectrum, such as the 850MHz, is particularly suited to providing high-quality indoor mobile coverage. Hanssen said that re-farming creates a 4G coverage layer that complements its existing high-band 4G network that uses the 1800MHz spectrum band, and offers superfast data speeds.

The company has just completed a successful trial across greater Newcastle, NSW, during which it tested a wide range of 4G-compatible devices at more than 40 sites.

Hanssen said the beauty of re-farming its 850MHz spectrum for 4G, is that the company already owns the spectrum.

"I am pleased we are able to use the flexibility of our new network to provide our customers with an even better 4G experience. This provides Vodafone the platform for the next stage of our network evolution," said Mr Hanssen.

"Customers already love Vodafone's new 4G network because they get great data speeds and large data allowances. We're the obvious choice for people who can't live without their mobile devices," said Mr Hanssen.

Mr Hanssen said Vodafone's overall network was performing very well following billions of dollars in investment over the past three years. Since 2011 the company has undertaken a complete rebuild of its 3G network, launched 3G+ and 4G networks.

"It's getting harder for our competitors' to justify charging more. Our customers are enjoying our new network and those who have recently joined us are impressed how far we've come," said Mr Hanssen.

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