

MEDIA RELEASE – 14 March 2017

Small business and the internet - your options and why you should care

Small businesses on the Sunshine Coast are losing out because of inadequate internet speed and reliability – and are prepared to pay for a better service.

That is the finding of research conducted by Digital Sunshine Coast into the impact of slow internet on business productivity as part of a campaign known as #SPEEDITUP.

The Sunshine Coast is arguably the home of small business, with 35,326 out of 36,002 businesses based in the region falling under the category of small business, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Research conducted by Digital Sunshine Coast – a project hosted by Regional Development Australia Sunshine Coast, the Sunshine Coast Council and Noosa Shire Council to promote digital innovation to the business community – shows a demand for improved internet speed and efficiency.

It showed 86% of businesses relied on the internet for their core operations, and 98% wanted faster and/or more stable internet for their business needs. It also showed they were prepared to pay for a better service.

RDASC CEO Darrell Edwards presented the findings to several Telcos and asked for a commitment to accelerated and increased infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast.

They said fibre was the fastest broadband service and was available up to Noosa. However there could be a cost issue with connectivity of “the last mile”.

Mr Edwards said the NBN rollout was accelerating across the Coast with over 66,000 premises ready for service, but only approximately 16,000 had been connected.

He said a further 28,220 premises were under construction and would be live by the end of 2017. Visit nbnco.com.au to see if you are eligible to connect.

Mr Edwards said if businesses were not prepared to wait for NBN or believed NBN may not be the answer for them, other solutions could be considered.



“Microwave solutions can assist in the more remote locations, depending on line of sight to satellite dishes,” he said. “More areas are being added each month and innovative solutions are being developed.”

Mr Edwards said it was important to consider how best to utilise increased speed in building business productivity, efficiency and capability.

“Understand how you compare with your competitors by completing the Queensland Government Digital Scorecard and consider the Level UP program run by Sunshine Coast Council to improve your digital understanding and capability,” he said.

“Also look to bundle telecommunications with your internet to provide the most cost effective solution.”

Mr Edwards said businesses should not think of fast and stable internet as a cost – rather as an ‘efficiency enabler’.

“What is slow, unstable Internet costing you in health and wellbeing, time with your family, lost sales opportunities, under-utilisation of your workforce, employee satisfaction and retention for the sake of \$40-\$60 extra per month?” he said.

As a result of the #SPEEDITUP campaign, Digital Sunshine Coast has compiled a report on the opportunity costs of inadequate broadband and technologies to businesses, what sort of internet access is available on the Sunshine Coast, and how businesses might be able to speed it up.

“We have also provided additional tools and resources, and case studies of Sunshine Coast businesses who have taken advantage of world leading applications to significantly change their business operations and increase their productivity,” said Mr Edwards.

The #SPEEDITUP report, campaign findings and action plan are available at:
<http://digitalsunshinecoast.com.au/campaign/speed-it/results>

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