WBA OpenRoaming to Power a New Era in Digital Inclusion Across Australia's Remote First Nations Communities

WBA OpenRoaming™ will provide seamless free connectivity to hundreds of "previously forgotten" Indigenous Australians through Easyweb's ground-breaking First Nations Community Wi-Fi Project

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, October 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Some of Australia's most remote and marginalized communities will gain access to lifechanging avenues of online healthcare, education, and secure communications, with the arrival of a public Wi-Fi network with the seamless, high-speed connectivity of OpenRoaming™.

The [Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA)](#), the global industry body dedicated to improving Wi-Fi standards and services, today announced the launch of a

An image of mesh node on a pole

breakthrough OpenRoaming deployment in five remote Central Australian communities and 11 'town camps' in Alice Springs – providing hundreds of residents with free, secure Internet access through [Easyweb](#) Digital's solar-powered Community Wi-Fi Hubs.

The deployment will provide the largely Indigenous residents with seamless switching between a growing number of Easyweb networks that support OpenRoaming in towns and community centers across Central Australia. A powerful combination of OpenRoaming, Wi-Fi, and Geostationary and Low Earth Orbit satellite backhaul will provide unprecedented redundancy and reliability in a region long characterised by poor communications and devastating social disadvantage.

Each of the autonomous assets deployed in the project will be powered by a standalone solar

headend, and 'weather-proofed' against the extreme desert environment. The OpenRoaming network will offer seamless 'cellular-like' access to broadband speeds of up to 300 Mbps, while the system's advanced redundancy will prioritize low-latency Voice over Wi-Fi calls and essential health, education and emergency services – all of which depend on stable and accessible Internet connections.

Where Wi-Fi is "critical as water"
"Internet connectivity empowers remote communities and allows them to access basic services and thrive," said Tiago Rodrigues, CEO of the Wireless Broadband Alliance. "For these communities, Wi-Fi is as critical as water. It is a must for social and economic development that OpenRoaming projects across the globe are driving up digital inclusion. This project is already showing how having a global connectivity infrastructure that reaches all communities, has the potential to transform civilization."

An image of one of the installation sites

Logo of the Wireless Broadband Alliance

"In the past, people in these towns could walk for a whole day to check their bank balance or access eGovernment services," said Darryl Clarke, CEO of Easyweb Digital. "This OpenRoaming solution will deliver an all-in-one solution for these previously forgotten people to gain easy and secure online access in any local community. As we grow our OpenRoaming coverage across the region, people will be able to connect wherever they go – so they'll never have to plan their day around where they'll be connecting."

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>
> *Tiago Rodrigues, CEO, Wireless Broadband Alliance*

The project, delivered by Easyweb via WBA members Encapto and Cambium Networks (https://www.cambiumnetworks.com/), is focused on delivering 'place-based' telecommunications infrastructure to improve digital connectivity across

remote communities in Central Australia. Residents of these small communities are highly mobile, regularly travelling 300-500km round trips to neighboring communities or Alice Springs, to visit family, participate in sports or cultural events, or access essential services.

"Providing connectivity to these regions has been notoriously challenging in the past, due to their remoteness, high levels of social disadvantage, and low levels of digital literacy," added Mr Clarke. "For First Nations communities, smartphones are the primary way of accessing online services, but in the past connectivity has been slow, unreliable, and expensive. Providing free connectivity to residents in these communities is a critical first step in enabling them to access the services they need."

Driving digital inclusion OpenRoaming allows users with varying technical skills to easily move between different Wi-Fi and cellular networks through a profile installed on their mobile device, which automatically authenticates them while ensuring the highest standards of security and data privacy. By allowing users to automatically connect to the nearest Community Wi-Fi Hub without repeated logins, OpenRoaming will provide uninterrupted connectivity.

Voice over Wi-Fi is a particularly important feature in this region, where

Tiago Rodrigues, CEO of the Wireless Broadband Alliance

Haast's Bluff Australia - Credit: Graham Winterflood - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24971175

communities such as Haasts Bluff/Ikuntji and Nturiya have no cellular service. In future, Easyweb Digital hopes to support the development of educational resources and training programs to promote new digital skills in these communities, as well as developing a helpline and a

smartphone app to support its Wi-Fi customers.

The deployment of Community Wi-Fi Hubs with OpenRoaming is based on Cambium Networks XV2-2T0 outdoor Wi-Fi APs and XV2-21X indoor APs, Encapto software, and Easyweb managing and deploying the end-to-end solution, which includes solar-powered cabinets and mesh network backhaul for continuity of service, using GEO and LEO satellites. The mesh capability means these networks can also be cost-effectively scaled through the installation of simple nodes to deliver premium-grade Wi-Fi to community halls, health centres, schools, and other public buildings. In addition, the Encapto platform enables mesh networks to be extended to in-the-home Wi-Fi services using a 'freemium' model that ensures free access to basic services, and commercialisation opportunities for premium levels of connectivity.

For more information on OpenRoaming, visit the WBA OpenRoaming (https://wballiance.com/openroaming/) and WBA Resources pages (http://wballiance.com/resources/wba-white-papers/) of the Wireless Broadband Alliance website.

About the Wireless Broadband Alliance
Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA) is the global organization that connects people with the latest Wi-Fi initiatives. Founded in 2003, the vision of the WBA is to drive seamless, interoperable service experiences via Wi-Fi within the global wireless ecosystem. WBA's mission is to enable collaboration between service providers, technology companies, cities, regulators, and organizations to achieve that vision.

WBA undertakes programs and activities to address business and technical challenges, while exploring opportunities for its member companies. These initiatives encompass standards development, industry guidelines, trials, certification, and advocacy. Its key programs include NextGen Wi-Fi, OpenRoaming, 5G, IoT, Smart Cities, Testing & Interoperability, and Policy & Regulatory Affairs, with Member-led Work Groups dedicated to resolving standards and technical issues to promote end-to-end services and accelerate business opportunities.

Membership in the WBA includes major operators, service providers, enterprises, hardware and software vendors, and other prominent companies that support the ecosystems from around the world. The WBA Board comprises influential organizations such as Airties, AT&T, Boingo Wireless, Boldyn Networks, Broadcom, BT, Charter Communications, Cisco Systems, Comcast, HFCL, Intel, Reliance Jio, Telecom Deutschland, and Turk Telekom.

About Easyweb Digital
Easyweb Digital is a Melbourne-based Wi-Fi provider that has been designing, building, and maintaining bespoke community Wi-Fi solutions in regional, rural, and remote communities across Australia and New Zealand for the past 20 years. Since 2005, the company has built more than 2,100 Wi-Fi networks, and it currently manages 2,300 Wi-Fi access points – connecting more than 700,000 digital devices to the Internet each year.

Easyweb is one of Australia's leading specialists in the design and delivery of custom Wi-Fi solutions for remote communities. As well as deep experience working in Indigenous communities, the company enjoys close relationships with the National Broadband Network (nbn), many NGOs operating in Central Australia, Regional Councils, and the NT Government.

About Encapto
Encapto is a leading Australian-based company specializing in building user engagement, configuration, reporting, and control systems for WiFi networks. Developed by WiFi integrators with over a decade of experience, Encapto provides sophisticated WiFi solutions to clients around the globe. The company focuses on simplifying network management for operators and delivering high-quality features that meet the evolving needs of network owners.

Encapto's WiFi applications connect tens of millions of users to the internet in diverse environments, from municipalities in Paris and Ontario to remote communities across Australia, Africa and India. With deep expertise in carrier-class WiFi management, Encapto works with major telecommunications networks to deliver services that surpass industry standards. Encapto continues to empower organizations by enhancing connectivity, reliability, and control for WiFi networks worldwide.

About Cambium Networks
Cambium Networks enables service providers, enterprises, industrial organizations, and governments to deliver exceptional digital experiences and device connectivity with compelling economics. Our ONE Network platform simplifies management of Cambium's wired and wireless broadband and network edge technologies, allowing customers to focus more on managing their business rather than the network. We make connectivity that just works.

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