

Whangarei web now faster than a speeding bullet

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Whangarei businesses will have access to faster broadband speeds from tomorrow through a super-fast fibre network link.

Telstra Clear has been working with lines company Northpower since May to deliver faster broadband services via a fibre network to Whangarei's central business district.

The project has boosted Telstra Clear's network capacity by five times, enabling businesses, schools and hospitals to send and receive information at speeds of up to 1GB per second.

Residential customers will be able to access the faster broadband in mid-2009.

The company is believed to be the first to offer broadband at this speed in Whangarei.

Telecom is not far behind, and will offer similar speeds by the end of the year to businesses and some residential customers.

Telecom media relations executive Ian Bonnar said an upgrade was due to be completed on Friday and the new broadband plans would be fully operational from mid-December.

Some residential customers would also be able to access the higher speeds, depending on where they were – but would have to pay for it.

Northpower's marketing manager Darren Mason said his firm got in behind the project because it was about "improving our own patch".

"It's what we're already doing – using what's there makes sense. Lines companies have a big role to play in helping broadband expand."

He said many Whangarei firms were complaining broadband speeds weren't fast enough.

Head of Mobile and Alternative Networks at Telstra Clear, John Bone, said faster speeds would help develop Northland's economy. "There are lots of primary growth industries in Northland with international markets ... Through a super-fast data exchange the opportunity to collaborate in an IP-based world is significantly enhanced."

He said existing distribution networks in Whangarei were challenged because of their age and physical limitations of copper. "It's well-known copper is old and limited in potential."

Mr Bone was reluctant to mention the prices of Telstra Clear's plans saying they were commercially sensitive. However he did say the speed and cost of plans varied.

APN, which owns the Northern Advocate (and the NZ Herald) is one of the first in Whangarei to sign up to the plan. The time it takes to electronically transmit pages to the printers in Auckland will be cut from 10 minutes to less than two minutes.

– NORTHERN ADVOCATE



Telstra Clear's fast new network will go live in Whangarei tomorrow.