BAI, OneWiFi & Infrastructure revealed as NSW sharing trial workstream leaders

BAI Communications and OneWiFi & Infrastructure will lead two of the four workstreams in Stage One of NSW's $50 million Mobile Coverage Project announced last week.

CommsDay has learned that BAI will lead the OpenRAN workstream while OneWiFi & Infrastructure will lead the multi-operator radio access network equipment sharing trials. Last week regional telecommunications carrier Field Solutions Holdings was named leader of the active neutral host, or multi-operator core networks stream. CommsDay understands that the fourth stream covering domestic roaming will be led by a third party facilitator organised by the NSW Government. Other companies involved in the four workstreams include Optus, Telstra, TPG Telecom, NEC and Pivotel.

The NSW Government's neutral host pilot, with mobile operators and mobile network infrastructure providers, forms part of its $300 million Regional Digital Connectivity program. The 14-week Stage One design phase will inform the delivery of an additional $250 million committed to regional mobile coverage.

"We will be leading the MORAN stream of the program, which we believe to provide the most acceptable outcome from both a commercial and technical perspective under a neutral host model, as it addresses critical coverage requirements while maintaining service differentiation for the mobile network operators," OneWiFi & Infrastructure managing director Mevan Jayatilleke told CommsDay. "The OneWiFi team assembled for the program has been involved in the development of our 5G neutral host platform over the past few years and bring along relevant expertise in putting together major mobile network joint ventures, including Optus/Vodafone eJV and OPEL, to ensure a successful outcome for the NSW Government and the regional/rural community."

In a MORAN model, typically only the RAN elements are shared. Specifically, the base transceiver station, base station controller, node B and radio network controller are split into multiple virtual radio access networks, each connected to the core network of the respective operator. Operators continue to use their own dedicated frequency bands.

MOCN is similar to the MORAN in that the operators' core networks remain separate while the RAN elements are shared. In addition, MOCN shares the same base station radios and uses spectrum pooling, which increases the number of usable frequency blocks. Participating operators in this arrangement tend to be similar in terms of

market presence and spectrum assets in order to create an equitable arrangement.

FSG is separately planning to commence federally-funded neutral host network trials, in conjunction with Optus, as part of the Commonwealth Mobile Blackspots Program.

Simon Dux