OneWiFi & Infrastructure warns of "deadweight losses" if active sharing isn't adopted

OneWiFi & Infrastructure said that if mobile operators shared their active mobile equipment and transmission, an additional 30% to 40% of the capital and ongoing cost savings can be achieved beyond what is currently being gained via traditional passive infrastructure colocations in regional Australia.

In a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's regional telecommunications inquiry, the active neutral host provider said such a model represents the most efficient use of capital to expand regional mobile coverage at the lowest cost, while minimising economic "deadweight" losses.

"The additional savings are not just through the consolidation of multiple sets of RAN equipment into one, but also other related cost drivers, such as decreased power requirements and consumption, which also potentially enables the use of renewable power solutions to reduce carbon handprint," said OneWiFi & Infrastructure managing director Mevan Jayatilleke. "Essentially, an active neutral host can utilise the same amount of public funding and private co-contribution to deliver more regional mobile sites, potentially in a more sustainable way and with a smaller environmental handprint."

He said while smaller towns and transport corridors will still need to be majority funded by governments, where locations are moderately commercially viable, the sector is incentivised to co-contribute "as there is still no business case for even one single operator. Jayatilleke told CommsDay there was a risk that if active neutral hosting was not adopted the nation will end up with "more areas with zero coverage, as higher bandwidth services will create more capacity holes in operators' networks."

"By onboarding multiple MNOs to the active neutral host service, we can also enable greater mobile service options for consumers, and facilitate service-based and price-based competition," he said. "For government agencies and regulators, there are tangible and lasting social, economic, and competition outcomes, which could be further amplified with wholesale service enablement mandates, such as MVNO access."

OVEN READY: OneWiFi & Infrastructure head of RF planning and design Neil Robinson said active neutral hosts can be technically delivered today with the current RAN and baseband technologies, with trade-offs that need to be considered around RF power and spectrum holdings in the technical design and RAN configuration.

BEYOND REGIONAL: OneWiFi & Infrastructure, acting as the mobile network infrastructure provider, was the multiple operator RAN workstream lead, working with three MNOs project participants, on the recently completed NSW Mobile Active Sharing Program managed by the Department of Regional New South Wales to deliver ac-

tive network sharing models for regional and remote areas of NSW and better address mobile blackspots. The company has also been working with other state agencies, local government, MNOs, industry associations, and the property sector on various active neutral hosting and infrastructure harmonisation initiatives.

Jayatilleke told CommsDay the NSW approach should be considered countrywide. "It is the only way to preserve competition, truly bridge the digital divide and provide consumers real choice," he said. "Hats off to DRNSW for being so visionary and bold."

He also believes active neutral hosts are not only for regional areas. "We are looking at active neutral host not just in the regional context, there are also opportunities to deliver the model for different use cases and environments, such as growth precincts, major transport corridors, and in-building coverage, to really leverage the benefits of shared network economics and infrastructure harmonisation."

<div align="right">Simon Dux</div>