

ASX Announcement

Field Solutions Holdings Limited (ASX: FSG)
ASX Limited
Company Announcements Office

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FSG Selects Nokia and Mavenir as Technology Partners for Australia's 4th Mobile Network

Field Solutions Holdings Limited (ASX: FSG), Australia's leading rural and regional telecommunications carrier, is pleased to announce it has selected Nokia and Mavenir as primary technology partners to build FSG's RAN - Regional Australia Network, Australia's 4th Mobile Network.

Highlights

- Technology partners to supply 4G and 5G radio access networks and mobile core
- Mavenir® to provide 4G/5G Converged Packet core, as well as IMS Voice and Messaging services
- FSG to deliver Australia's 4th 4G/5G mobile network in rural, regional, and remote areas
- FSG to deliver private 4G/5G networks for agribusiness, mining, and government
- NB-IoT and Cat-M1 capability
- Nokia and Mavenir to power FSG's Neutral Host and Domestic Roaming Trials under MBSP5A
- Rollout to commence FY23

"FSG has run a comprehensive 6-month RFP process to select the most appropriate technology partners for the rollout of the Regional Australia Network," said Andrew Roberts, FSG CEO. "FSG has selected these partners to ensure we have the cost-effective, future proof and globally proven technology platform needed to deliver Australia's 4th mobile network", he added.

The recently released response to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review highlighted the importance of alternate delivery models to drive coverage enhancements, including active neutral host RAN and Roaming options. It also highlighted the importance of "place-based network solutions" rather than a continued "sprinkle" approach to resolving connectivity issues. Further, the report emphasised the need for scarce government funding to be allocated to multi-tenanted solutions.

FSG welcomes these recommendations and is fully supportive of "place-based network solutions." "Together with our new partners, Nokia and Mavenir, FSG is primed to deliver connectivity to regions, whilst offering capability for carriers to join the solution using Active Neutral host RAN, inbound roaming or 'old school' passive co-location on our purpose-built infrastructure" outlines Roberts. By embracing new models, the cost to deliver these solutions can be kept to a minimum, further supporting the committee's desire to ensure that affordability is not forgotten.

FSG are in the process of delivering 19 new place-based networks across Australia. These networks, comprising over 100 sites, each of which will be 4G and 5G capable, Neutral Host and Roaming ready when delivered in FY 23/24. "The Regional Australia Network is a dedicated network supporting rural Australia," says Roberts. "Today, we operate Australia's largest non-NBN fixed wireless network, which delivers fixed wireless broadband across rural, regional and remote Australia. The Regional Australia Network (RAN™) will see these current and all new networks being enabled to delivery 4G and 5G data and voice services, fixed wireless broadband together with NB-IoT and Cat-M1 services", says Roberts.

ASX Announcement



Anna Perrin, Nokia’s Managing Director for Australia and New Zealand said, “As a world-leading provider of mobile technology, we have championed the development of Neutral Host networks around the world and we’re excited to bring this global expertise to our partnership with FSG. Supporting the creation of new and innovative solutions and business models for rural and remote coverage across Australia”

“Mavenir is excited to partner with FSG to deliver a cost-effective, future proof and globally proven 4G/5G Cloud-native Converged Packet Core, IMS and messaging services to enable Australia’s 4th mobile network,” said Dereck Quinlan, Mavenir Regional VP.

“Mavenir continues to drive forward with advanced cloud-native solutions that our customers and the industry recognise. Our Cloud-native Converged Packet Core solution embraces a disruptive technology architecture and business model that drive network agility, deployment flexibility, and service velocity,” says Quinlan.

FSG is currently in the site acquisition phase for its 19 new networks and the MBSP5A trial sites, with the bulk of sites to be delivered during FY23.

FSG will also be delivering private 4G and 5G LTE service offerings. “The demand for private 4G and 5G networks is gaining momentum, FSG will be delivering cost-effective, carrier-grade private solutions for Agri-Business, Mining and Government”, outlines Roberts. We expect to be announcing several private 4G and 5G private network deployments in the coming weeks,” says Roberts.

FSG have received overwhelming support from regional Australia to provide a “choice.” “For too long regional Australia has had to accept sub-par services which do not meet the quality and capacity needs of businesses and residents in rural and remote locations,” says Roberts. “We are delighted to partner with Nokia and Mavenir, both global leaders in mobile telecommunications, to combine their state-of-the-art technologies with Field Solutions on the ground experience and pragmatic design and delivery capabilities, to deliver carrier-grade solutions designed to meet the needs of regional Australia, says Roberts.

Over the next 18 months, FSG, in partnership with the Australian Federal Government and Optus, will be trialling the deployment of Australia first Active Neutral Host Network. The neutral host model enables FSG to build and operate infrastructure and a single set of electronics that all mobile network operators in Australia can utilise and will be ready for PSMB services “The more carriers subscribe to the model, the more valuable and impactful it is for Australian Rural communities and Australia as a whole”, commented Roberts, “We look forward to welcoming the other Australian Carriers to the program, to make the neutral host model a reality for rural, regional and remote Australia”, says Roberts.

“FSG and Optus share the view of delivering more coverage to regional areas; the neutral host model delivers a cost-effective strategy for all mobile network operators to provide coverage whilst at the same time greatly reducing the operating costs and overhead of maintaining duplicated infrastructure and electronics in regional areas,” outlines Roberts. “The neutral host model delivers more coverage to regional Australia from programs such as the Federal Governments Mobile Blackspot Program,” says Roberts. “Today’s government funding supports network duplication in regional areas, by deploying the Neutral Host Model, we aim to cover more of regional, rural and remote Australia for the same Federal Government investment.

This release has been authorised by the Board of Field Solutions Holdings Limited.

ASX Announcement



About Field Solutions Group

FSG provides, builds, and operates “true broadband networks” specifically for rural, regional, and remote Australia. FSG is a licensed Australian telecommunications carrier, a retail service provider (trading under the brands “JustISP,” “TasmaNet” and “Ant Communications), and an NBN Co Retail and Business Service Provider.

About Nokia

At Nokia, we create technology that helps the world act together.

As a trusted partner for critical networks, we are committed to innovation and technology leadership across mobile, fixed and cloud networks. We create value with intellectual property and long-term research, led by the award-winning Nokia Bell Labs.

Adhering to the highest standards of integrity and security, we help build the capabilities needed for a more productive, sustainable, and inclusive world.

About Mavenir

Mavenir is building the future of networks and pioneering advanced technology, focusing on the vision of a single, software-based automated network that runs on any cloud. As the industry's only end-to-end, cloud-native network software provider, Mavenir is focused on transforming the way the world connects, accelerating software network transformation for 250+ Communications Service Providers in over 120 countries, which serve more than 50% of the world's subscribers.

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