Robust Christchurch fibre network ready for Government-backed expansion

Fast growing Christchurch fibre operator Enable Networks has declared its readiness for the Government's ultra-fast broadband initiative.

And the company's CEO Steve Fuller wants to kick-start the Government backed Christchurch wide fibre network build now. Enable has experienced a significant lift in demand as local businesses reassess their risk profile and adopt a 'hosted IT' environment.

"A very noticeable trend post-earthquake is that many businesses are moving their servers or backing up into data centres," says Mr Fuller, who is also chairman of the New Zealand Regional Fibre Group.

"This investment in the 'Cloud' has long been talked about, and the earthquake has demonstrated that from a business continuity and recovery perspective, data centres and cloud computing are now top of mind for Christchurch businesses of all sizes. In fact smaller businesses often have more to gain."

Enable is currently in negotiations with the Crown Fibre Holdings over Christchurch's UFB network. Mr Fuller says his company clearly has the credibility to build a world class fibre network to 180,000 premises in Christchurch, Rangiora and Rolleston over the next ten years.

Enable already has fibre past the doors of 85% of Christchurch businesses and has connected over 60 schools and most major health entities.

"Throughout the Christchurch earthquakes our network has held up exceptionally well which is proof of how well designed and purpose built it is. The fact it did not suffer any breaks through the earthquakes is significant," says Mr Fuller.

GPS records show the fibre has moved in places, however, after two earthquakes there has not been a single fibre failure on Enable's network.

Enable's network is designed to be extremely robust by using a strong continuous double ducted, air blown fibre system which is world leading and achieves high degrees of flexibility, says Mr Fuller.

Mr Fuller believes Enable Networks was well prepared post-earthquake with spare fibre capacity all around the city so that affected businesses were able to be moved to new locations - sometimes within a matter of days.

"With so many priority users connected to our network it was critical to keep their communications channels open and our fibre network allowed that.

"An example is with the Greater Christchurch Schools Network (GCSN) where a number of Christchurch schools are now sharing space with others. In some cases we have been able to move our schools fibre connection to follow them.

"Since February 22 our team and our contractors have been working around the clock to relocate businesses out of damaged buildings, into new locations. The TVNZ building in Gloucester St was a key network node for many network operators and ISPs. All the Enable fibre into that building had to be relocated to alternative locations within days due to the risk of the building collapsing and standby power failing."

Enable also provided fibre for many key recovery organisations, including the Earthquake Commission, the health sector, Police and Internal Affairs. High speed fibre links were installed into the Civil Defence headquarters for vital communications with Central Government, he says.

Although many businesses have been forced to relocate Enable's high volumes of fibre into all commercial areas already has meant it became a lifeline for relocating businesses, says Mr Fuller.

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