

New national LTE-A network on the cards for SA

Paul Harris, chairman of Wireless Business Solutions (WBS) - the company that owns iBurst - has announced a multi-billion rand investment in a new high speed LTE-A national data network.



Paul Harris, WBS chairman.

The network will use WBS' existing spectrum assignments in the 1800 and 2600 Mhz bands. It will be enabled to use 5G when the technology is rolled out internationally inside the next five years and will place South Africa amongst the leaders in the field. A limited number of sites are already in operation and existing WBS customers will be converted to the new network - with national roll-out commencing in the next few months.

"The network will provide super fast broadband to consumers and businesses alike. It will be superior to copper/ADSL offerings and an attractive alternative to fibre to the home (FTTH). Speed and performance will be comparable to fibre with the advantages that it can be deployed without the cost of digging up suburban streets and time delay in eventually reaching all residential areas," said the company.

"Once the network is rolled out WBS will be able to offer mobile broadband on smartphones, tablets and other devices supporting the Internet of Things. In the foreseeable future the majority of voice calls will be carried on data networks thereby effectively providing consumers with a combined data and voice offering."

WBS says it has the advantage of not having to invest in legacy networks such as 2G and 3G and will consequently deploy

cutting-edge technology referred to as LTE-A PRO or 4.5G. The new network will be deployed on some of WBS' own 400 sites and sites leased from tower companies and other telecommunications providers.

The company was recently acquired by the network management company Multisource. Other shareholders and directors include Phumlani Moholi, the ex CTO of MTN; Brandon Leigh of Multisource; Ravi Naidoo, founding CEO of Design Indaba; Michael Jordaan, ex CEO of FNB; and Duncan Simpson-Craib, the MultiSource Group CEO.

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