Strengthening communications for the Shoalhaven region through the utilisation of Pivotel's business nbn™ Satellite Service

The Challenge

After experiencing the devastating Currowan bushfires in 2019-2020 which left hundreds of people stranded with no access to crucial information, the Shoalhaven City Council knew it had to find a way to improve communication across the region.

The Solution

Council elected to roll out a series of community information hubs that are powered by a layered communication solution, ensuring they remain connected and operational at all times to equip the community with essential information.

> "Designated community areas now have peace of mind knowing they can access critical information from authorities in the case of an emergency or in an event such as a power outage. Installing this service has optimised safety across the region.

> - Dan Jones
> **IT Service and Infrastructure Manager Shoalhaven City Council**

The Challenge

Located approximately 200 kilometres south of Sydney on the South Coast of New South Wales, the City of Shoalhaven covers 49 towns and villages across an area of around 4,500km^2.

After the community experienced the devastating Currowan bushfires in 2019-2020 which left hundreds of people stranded with little to no mobile coverage, and with a lack of access to authoritative, timely, accurate, local information, the Shoalhaven City Council knew it had to find a way to improve communication across the region.

Due to the area's vulnerability to both floods and bushfires, and with many locations in Shoalhaven having only one road in and one road out, Council elected to roll out a series of community information hubs across the region. The community information hubs are designed to display crucial information on digital signage at 26 popular sites throughout Shoalhaven and equip the community, residents and visitors with essential local information in real-time, including live warning signs, which allow people to make informed decisions to ensure their safety.

One of the key challenges with the deployment of the 26 community information hubs was finding a connectivity solution that would ensure the hubs would remain connected and operational in all types of situations that such a system would experience.

"The Shoalhaven region was well connected, but after losing internet services and communications when the 2019-2020 Currowan bushfires occurred, Shoalhaven City Council needed to source a solution that would prevent this from happening again in the event of an emergency." - Dan Jones, IT Service and Infrastructure Manager at the Shoalhaven City Council

The Solution

To construct a resilient communication system, the Shoalhaven City Council sought a layered solution that could incorporate cellular services for the primary link at 24 of the 26 sites with failover to a satellite network when the cellular link becomes congested or unavailable. Due to coverage limitations in the area, two of the sites needed to be powered solely by satellite connectivity.

Council selected rural, remote and regional communication specialists, Pivotel, to consult, project manage and provide the installation of the 26 business nbn™ Satellite Services across the region.

Pivotel recommended that Shoalhaven deploy the nbn™ Disaster Recovery (DR) service which is specifically designed to operate in 'stand-by' mode until a major outage of the primary network occurs. In the event of a cellular outage, the network is configured to automatically failover to the DR service which will kick in as a backup once the outage begins, providing access to the internet via satellite when it's needed most.

The Outcome

After installing Pivotel's business nbn™ Satellite Service at the 26 sites, the Shoalhaven community now has a solution that has access to reliable connectivity in the areas that need it most, when they need it most.

The deployment of satellite services at each of the individual community information hubs is crucial for Shoalhaven, as it provides reliable and efficient communication services and the ability to coordinate and respond in the event of an emergency. If disaster strikes and all terrestrial services are unavailable, the community information hubs will remain operational and enable the rapid dissemination of vital information, facilitate access to critical resources, and act as a lifeline to affected individuals which could mean the difference between life and death.

Consequently, Pivotel's business nbn™ Satellite Service has provided more than just a reliable connection – it has eased the minds of both locals and visitors.

About the Pivotel business nbn™ Satellite Service

The business nbn™ Satellite Service satellite beam coverage covers 100% of the continent, including all of mainland Australia, Tasmania and large surrounding islands to help service providers deliver business-grade services to companies with hard to reach remote operations.

- 0.74m Antenna
- Gemini Modem
- 2.5W Transceiver
- 30 Mbps VSAT License
- Roof Mount Router
- Fully managed services backed by Pivotel's dedicated team of remote communication experts

About Shoalhaven City Council

Sweeping from Kangaroo Valley the northern border across to Durras North the southern border, the Shoalhaven is framed by mountains, coastal plains and 100 magnificent beaches. The 49 towns and villages are home to over 100,000 residents and thriving native wildlife and the area hosts more than 300,000 visitors each year.

Living in the Shoalhaven means an abundance of lakes, great surf beaches, beach fishing, watersports, excellent bushwalking tracks, sporting fields, and community centres and art galleries. Shoalhaven City Council is committed to delivering high quality services and facilities for the community to sustain and develop our unique environment.