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# COMMUNICATIONS DAY

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## Aperto confirms 5.8GHz WiMax tests, 8 rural locations

US WiMax supplier Aperto Networks has confirmed that it has tested its technology in eight rural Australian locations in the 3.5GHz and 5.8GHz bands, pouring fuel on speculation that the company is in talks with Optus to deploy base stations around Australia. In an interview with CommsDay, Aperto president and CEO Michael Pratt said the company was pursuing a range of commercial opportunities and claimed trials are going well.

"We've done tests with 3.5GHz and 5.8GHz and the difference [in performance] is not significant," Pratt told CommsDay. He said Aperto has tested its WiMax base stations "in eight different locations," in "rural and small community areas." Pratt, however, refused to confirm or deny that Aperto had met with Optus during meetings with "customers and two very strong partners" in the past two days. "We're not at liberty to say," he said, but claimed "we think we have the only carrier class offering in 5.8GHz."

Pratt would not discuss whether Aperto was on a short list of tenderers for Optus' WiMax build. "I don't want to speculate about who Optus is entertaining, but I will say that in the unlicensed space and the 3.5GHz space our product performs exceedingly well against the competition," said Pratt. Optus is known to have trialled Alvarion 5.8GHz WiMax equipment.

Pratt said Aperto is looking at a number of potential builds in Australia but said of Opel "it is one of the more significant opportunities." Former communications minister Helen Coonan had intimated prior to the election that Optus-Elders joint venture Opel had locked in suppliers for \$958 million in Broadband Connect funding, while Optus has consistently refused to give detail.

"We are now on a global launch of our 5.8GHz product, which is targeted at unlicensed spectrum," Pratt said. He claims that the company is not only pursuing a potential Opel contract but also opportunities with smaller carriers. "Unlicensed spectrum is an important application across the globe. There are lots of second and third tier service providers that don't have licensed spectrum, so unlicensed spectrum is their opportunity to enter the space and compete, and we see that happening in Australia."

"There are other licensed carriers in Australia that are looking at our product right now and other carriers and service providers in the unlicensed spectrum also. Australia is going to be a very exciting hotbed," he said.

Pratt, although not directly discussing the government's proposed FTTN build, said that WiMax is a superior technology for rural areas. "In markets like Australia there's mature wireline infrastructure in metro areas but that doesn't necessarily address broadband access in more rural and smaller cities and towns," he said. "Even if you have the finances, you simply don't have the time to achieve broadband penetration with wireline technologies, you must look at wireless technologies, WiMax being the global standard to address that."

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