

# CommsWire

Essential daily reading for the communications industry executive

An iWire publication    [www.itwire.com](http://www.itwire.com)    Editor: Kenn Anthony Mendoza    Friday 29 September 2023

## Michelle Lim to step down as Commpete chair



CommsWire (ISSN 2202-4549) is published by iWire Pty Ltd. 18 Lansdown St, Hampton, Vic, 3188

CommsWire/Telecommunications Editor: Kenn Anthony Mendoza

Staff writers: Sam Varghese, Stan Beer, Stephen Withers

Advertising: CEO and Editor-in-Chief: Andrew Matler [andrew.matler@itwire.com](mailto:andrew.matler@itwire.com) • Tel: 0412 390 000

Alliance for competition in digital communications Commpete chair Michelle Lim announced she will step down from her position after six years leading the group and its growth since its launch.

Lim will also step down from her roles at Symbio and Communications Alliance to take some time out to focus on closing out some personal projects and travel before her oldest commences his high school placement next year.

Commpete will seek a new chairperson who will be elected following an extraordinary general meeting to be held later this year.

Lim will remain in a consultative role during the transition working closely with Commpete's public officer Jamie Morse, secretary Fionola O'Keeffe, and Commpete's representative committee.

Reflecting on her tenure, she said: "Commpete has made momentous ground in recent months. I couldn't be prouder of the work the team has tirelessly done throughout the last six years, culminating this year with anticompetitive proposals thwarted, marathon inquiries completed, and new technologies which can improve competition starting to flourish."

"There is much still to be done of course, but I've no doubt the organisation will continue to successfully promote and protect pro-competition policies and drive regulatory reform in Australia's telecoms markets, while also creating opportunities for smaller and challenger companies to deliver value and innovation for the nation's households and businesses."

Lim's departure sees breakthroughs for Commpete and Australia's telecoms industry, which include the Australian Competition Tribunal's decision to uphold the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) rejection of Telstra and TPG's proposed mobile spectrum merger in Australia's regional and rural areas.

The organisation also recently welcomed a revised stance proposed by NBN Co on achieving a commercial grade credit rating, which represented a significant improvement on previous Special Access Undertaking (SAU) proposals by the national broadband wholesaler.

Looking ahead, Commpete has charted two key priorities for the remainder of the year, centring on wholesale mobile access and satellite communications to support Australia's regional communities.

Commpete will advocate for the continuation of the declared termination services and associated mandated pricing, which is essential to ensure network operators can interconnect their networks without the risk of dominant providers refusing to supply services or engaging in predatory pricing.

Recent public inquiries have clearly shown the risk of predatory pricing for consumers, and the ACCC should not remove the declaration in their upcoming draft decision.

STAFF WRITER

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## GOOGLE TO BUILD NUVEM CABLE CONNECTING PORTUGAL, BERMUDA, US

Search monopoly Google is to build a new transatlantic subsea cable system to connect Portugal, Bermuda, and the US.

Google says the cable, called Nuvem, will improve network resiliency across the Atlantic and its path will add international route diversity and support the development of ICT infrastructure for the continents and countries involved.

Expected to be ready for service in 2026, Google says Nuvem will add capacity, increase reliability, and decrease latency for Google users and Google Cloud customers around the world.

On the US end, Nuvem will land in South Carolina.

"Alongside (Google-built cables) Firmina and Equiano, it will create important new data corridors connecting North America, South America, Europe, and Africa — serving as the underwater roots that strengthen the intercontinental network lattice while bringing together people and economies around the world," said Google in its announcement.

According to Google, Nuvem's landing locations are fast emerging as hubs for international connectivity and Bermuda's stakeholders agree.

Over the last few years, the Government of Bermuda has passed new legislation to create cable corridors and streamline permitting and Nuvem will be the first cable to connect Bermuda with Europe.

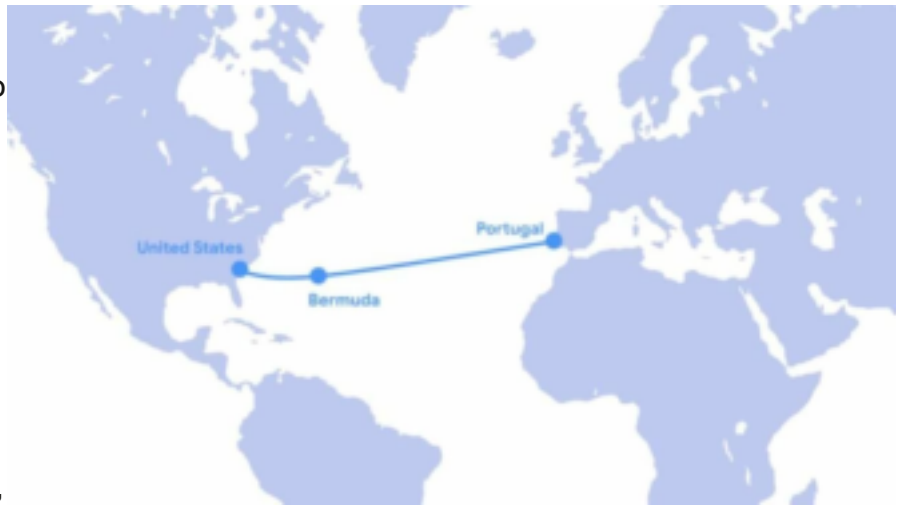
"Bermuda has long been committed to the submarine cable market, and we welcome the Nuvem cable to our fast-growing digital Atlantic hub," said Walter Roban, Bermuda Deputy Premier and Minister of Home Affairs.

"Bermuda looks forward to working with Google on its cable project — and on building a broader partnership to leverage the benefits of the investment in digital infrastructure."

"The BDA (Bermuda Business Development Agency) has long advocated that Bermuda's centrality makes it an ideal landfall and interconnection point for submarine cables between the Americas, Europe and Africa and we are so excited these efforts have borne fruit," said David Hart, CEO of the BDA.

"With around 95% of the world's communications being carried on submarine cable networks, Bermuda's role as an international data-transit switch will provide increased network resiliency and redundancy to countries on both sides of the Atlantic for decades to come."

According to Google, Portugal has similarly become a port for subsea cables because of its strategic geographic location and the country's focus on bolstering the infrastructure of the digital economy.



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Nuvem will be the latest member of Portugal's subsea cable portfolio, which also includes Equiano, the recently-completed system that connects Portugal with Togo, Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa, and St. Helena.

"Our goal is to transform these information highways into catalysts that draw in supplementary investments in cutting-edge technology sectors propelling the nation towards an effective digital transformation," said João Galamba, Portugal Minister of Infrastructure.

JOSH MARTINEZ

## HUAWEI NOW PART OF SISVEL IOT PATENT TOOL



Huawei patents will now be available through its Sisvel's cellular IoT technology patent pool after the company signed up to the program as a licensor.

Sisvel claimed it has patent from around 25 innovators.

The Sisvel cellular IoT patent pool offers device manufacturers licences—on fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory terms and conditions—to participants' patent portfolios essential to the LTE-M and NB-IoT standards.

It revealed new royalty rates for the cellular IoT patent pool, including for devices with a lower selling price. The firm has also expanded its offering to new product verticals.

"LTE-M and NB-IoT technologies are great solutions for anyone who wishes to connect products and services in the IoT arena, and Huawei's presence further strengthens the pool's licence offering as a one-stop shop for this market," said Sisvel cellular IoT program manager Sven Torringier.

"This is more proof of the work we are doing with cutting-edge companies to power innovation and a further sign of Huawei's confidence in us, after they became a founding member of our Wi-Fi 6 pool," said Sisvel president Mattia Fogliacco.

STAFF WRITER

## DOCOMO TO SELL 1,552 TELECOMS TOWERS TO JTOWER FOR US\$114M

Tokyo-based mobile operator NTT Docomo has agreed to sell 1552 of its telecoms towers inventory to Japanese infrastructure sharing company Jtower in a deal aimed at facilitating the sharing of Docomo's current telecommunication tower infrastructure.

The agreement, announced this week, will enable the ownership of an additional 1,552 Docomo towers to

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be transferred to Jtower for 17 billion yen (~US\$113.8 million), with Docomo subsequently leasing the towers from Jtower.

In March 2022, Jtower and Docomo entered into the master transaction agreement allowing the transfer of 6,002 of Docomo's telecommunications towers to Jtower.

By the end of June 2023, the transfer of approximately 2,400 towers had been completed and other mobile network operators are now being actively encouraged to make use of these.

The companies say the addition of this new agreement will enable the two companies to strengthen their network building and enable the towers to be used for a wider range of applications, facilitating the further sharing of infrastructure.

Jtower says the purchase of telecommunications towers and the enhancement of infrastructure-sharing by attracting new tenants is one of the infrastructure company's key growth strategies.

Docomo says it is actively working to build a viable 5G network by promoting infrastructure sharing and this transaction will enable further streamlining of its network operations.

Both companies say they will continue transitioning the ownership of towers that meet the necessary criteria in order to accelerate infrastructure sharing.

JOSH MARTINEZ



## TELECOM EGYPT BAGS MEDUSA SUBSEA CABLE DEAL

Integrated telecom operator Telecom Egypt and AFR-IX Telecom's Medusa Submarine Cable System have agreed to extend its cable which will connect to the Red Sea.

In a statement, the 8,760 km submarine cable will land in the Egyptian city of Port Said by the end of 2025 will be connected to the Red Sea landing stations of Suez, Zafarana, and Ras Ghareb through Telecom Egypt's crossing network.

The agreement will see Telecom Egypt offer direct access to all Medusa Mediterranean landings in Europe and North Africa to the Red Sea.

Telecom Egypt and AFR-IX Telecom previously signed an agreement to land Medusa in Port Said's landing station in March 2022. The cable will connect ten African and European countries Portugal, Morocco, Spain, France, Algeria, Tunisia, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Egypt.

The cable will become operational in the Western Mediterranean in 2025.

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The companies' CEOs signed the agreement during the Submarine Networks World event currently taking place in Singapore.



Egypt currently has 14 subsea cable systems, 10 landing stations and 10 terrestrial routes crossing the country, connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

“Egypt’s unique position between Europe, Asia, and Africa, complemented with Telecom Egypt’s diligent efforts and extensive expertise in the subsea cable landscape, promote the company’s position as a go-to global digital hub and enable it to attract and collaborate with mega industry players,” commented Telecom Egypt CEO and managing director Mohamed Nasr (right).

“With a partner like Telecom Egypt, we will be able to unleash the full potential of Medusa and extend it towards the Red Sea, further enabling enhanced regional connectivity and providing more efficient connectivity to the whole world,” said AFR-IX Telecom and Medusa CEO Norman Albi.

KENN ANTHONY MENDOZA

## NOKIA JOINS NEMC HUB TO DRIVE SEMICONDUCTOR PRODUCTION

Finnish telco vendor Nokia announced it has joined the Northeast Microelectronics Coalition (NEMC) Hub, a regional innovation hub led by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech).

The announcement comes timely as the NEMC Hub was awarded funding to advance the “microelectronics” needs of the US Department of Defence (DoD) as mandated by the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (Chips) and Science Act.

The Chips Act, which was signed last 9 August 2022, will bolster US semiconductor capacity, catalyse R&D, and create regional high-tech hubs and a more inclusive STEM workforce, according to McKinsey.



The DoD announced a US\$238 million funding to establish a total of eight Microelectronics Commons regional innovation hubs and core facilities across the US including the NEMC.

This will help make the “American supply chain more resilient, safeguard the nation from supply chain risks and support national security and access to key technologies to keep America at the forefront of innovation and technological development.”

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With US\$2 billion in funding for 2023-2027, the Microelectronics Commons program aims to bridge the gap between R&D and chip production.

“We are committed to ensuring US scientific and industrial powerhouses have access to cutting-edge semiconductors and can deliver what is needed to secure future semiconductor needs while mitigating any future supply chain challenges,” said Nokia chief strategy and technology officer Nishant Batra.

KENN ANTHONY MENDOZA

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[jennifer.smith@itwire.com](mailto:jennifer.smith@itwire.com)

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