

3G SERVICE BONANZA

Optus gets the message



Allen Lew

Fleur Leyden
Telos

OPTUS may have lagged the competition in launching its 3G service but the telco claims it has outdone its rivals by unveiling an instant messaging service, a unique datacard for laptops and a revamp of its Optus Zoo! internet-style portal.

The company's 3G, or "third generation" service, which allows a mobile phone to be used for video calling, email and downloading content such as music videos, will be available in Sydney, Melbourne,

Canberra, the Brisbane CBD and capital city airports.

But as launches go, Optus was still promising, saying that the full service would not be ready for another two weeks.

Allen Lew, Optus consumer managing director, said this was in plenty of time for Christmas.

"There is empirical evidence that people are starting to shop later and later for Christmas and there is even more empirical evidence that people don't really shop for pre-paid handsets until January, when the kids are off school and they have time off work and they are really looking around shopping centres," he said.

"So assuming it is out there on the 31st of November I would think it is well in time for Christmas."

And Mr Lew said Optus was in no way disadvantaged by being the last telco to launch 3G. It believed that the hold-up was due to problems with the network's roll-out.

Hutchison Telecommunications was the first to launch 3G in Australia, in April 2003, followed by Telstra in September this year.

Vodafone unveiled its offering at the end of last month.

"This is not a sprint, it is a marathon and we have delayed our launch primarily to make sure that we have got these things out there which we think will be appealing to customers rather than just going out with a stock standard product which is just video calling and video streaming, which although useful would not be as compelling," Mr Lew

said. Mr Lew said Optus' 3G service will include live television from SBS, ABC and CNN, as well as access to 7500 music titles.

The company also unveiled a laptop datacard service, known as Optus Wireless Connect, which is able to seamlessly roam between GSM, 3G and Wi-Fi networks.

An instant messaging which allows users to send and receive messages on their mobile as they would in a computer chat room, was also launched yesterday.

Optus will offer five new handsets and four capped plans ranging from \$45 to \$89 per month, as part of its 3G offer.

The shares of Singapore Telecommunications, owner of Optus, closed higher at \$1.85.

ADVERTISEMENT

Australia's prince of laundries celebrates 100 years

Immaculately laundered table linen, perfectly finished shirts, blouses and collars, although the laundry demands of our forefathers have not changed in the last 100 years, the industry certainly has. And Princes Laundry Services has been the leader in the field throughout all that time.

Princes' Laundry began operating in November 1905. Founded by retired merchant seaman John Prince to meet the laundering demands of residents of the towns of Mordialloc and Mentone in Victoria. Fine table linen and the stiff, winged collars of the time were meticulously laundered and pressed in a small room at the back of the Prince family home in Mentone. John and his wife took care of the washing and ironing and son Harry used to pick up and deliver the goods before school.

In 1924, Harry Prince now grown up, took over the reins and led the company into high speed laundering and dry cleaning. As demand grew so did the company and from 1950, Ivan Prince (grandson of John Prince) guided the organization with large-scale investment in the latest plant and technology to further improve standards and to meet the population's ever growing demands.

Prince's Laundry was one of the first laundries to enter the age of electronic data processing in 1972 with the purchase of its first computer to service their accounting and administration needs.

By appointment to the medical profession.

When hospitals and medical centers sought a higher standard of laundry service in Victoria, Princes Laundry Services met the challenge head on.

St Andrews in East Melbourne and St George's hospital in Kew were the first of the larger hospital clients to receive the "Princes touch" in the late 1930's. Princes have been servicing the demands of private hospitals for almost 70 years.

In 1978 the company took a calculated risk and constructed a specialized central linen service plant at Box Hill Victoria catering for the very particular requirements of hospitals and nursing homes throughout Melbourne.

The Princes philosophy has continued to see that the very best high technology equipment is utilized not only to keep up with rapidly increasing demands but also

to ensure the best quality linen is available consistently and economically.

At the hub of Princes' linen supply throughout its five plants in Victoria and Queensland is the Continuous Batch Washers of which there are now nine. Each of the nine washers is capable of producing 1000 kgs of washed linen per hour.

As Princes celebrates its 100th anniversary in November 2005 the company has grown from small beginnings to an organization employing 420 staff throughout Victoria and Queensland and processing over 25,000,000 kilos of linen annually.

Nappy Wash Victoria

The service is located at the company's Brneside laundry. Princes Nappy Wash Victoria ensures the delivery of regular supplies of freshly laundered nappies to homes, hospitals and childcare centers state-wide.

The Nappy Wash department currently provides service to over 5000 parents at home, more than 200 Melbourne childcare centers and many of Melbourne's maternity hospitals. On average, Princes commercial drivers deliver approximately 10,000 nappies each day with domestic deliveries averaging around 4000 units daily.

One of the main challenges facing the business recently has been water consumption. Each plant was using six million litres of water per month until the company sourced a system that gave significant water and energy reductions. Princes has spent \$750,000 over the last twelve months installing a water aquamiser and energy optimiser at each of its five plants. This has cut the water usage by 40% and has resulted in a savings of 2.4 million litres of water per month per plant or a total saving of 144 million litres of water per annum.

With an on-going policy of innovation and technical expertise firmly in place Princes Laundry Services is today looking forward to the next 100 years. Already operating in Queensland, the company is set to expand throughout Australia. From those early beginnings of wing collars and fine linen tablecloths to the present day Princes represents the leading edge in laundry and dry cleaning services. Congratulations Princes, here's to the next 100.



Prince's Laundry Warrigal Road Mentone



Staff folding linen 1930s

Congratulations Princes Laundry Services on 100 years in business

Princes
Laundry Services

Virgin bid to boost share

Anthony Marx

VIRGIN Blue is expected to unveil its long-anticipated frequent flyer program today in a bid to grow its share of the lucrative corporate travel market.

The airline board is understood to have signed off last month on the initiative, which is aimed at boosting the number of business travellers above the current level of about 35 per cent and making it more competitive with arch-rival Jetstar.

Market analysts have estimated the Brisbane-based carrier could spend up to \$60 million to start its loyalty program and increase passenger numbers 5 per cent over the next five years.

Virgin Blue has been running ads recently outlining its "next generation loyalty program". Jetstar already allows patrons to collect frequent flyer

points through the loyalty program operated by its parent company, Qantas.

Analysts said yesterday that the Virgin Blue scheme may not be as appealing because points will not be redeemable for international travel, as they are now with Jetstar and Qantas.

But Virgin Blue chief executive Brett Godfrey earlier this year promised the program would be a "category killer" and a "game changer" to shake up frequent flyer initiatives.

Virgin Blue is also scheduled tomorrow to release its results for the year to September 30, with net profit expected to be about \$105 million. The result is certain to be well down on the \$158.5 million the airline generated in the year to March 31, as increased fuel costs have severely dented earnings.

Young man on a high rise

From Page 29

The company will also operate another two sites offering permanent corporate-style accommodation in Brisbane.

Once listed, Amrites expects to be able to spend a further \$8 million on buying rights to other businesses without having to seek additional capital.

Investors will be offered 20 million shares, valued at 50c each, with one free option for every two shares exercisable at 60c before November 2007.

The prospectus forecasts earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation to reach \$3.799 million for the year to November 2005 and \$5.052 million in the 2006 financial year.

According to Mr Tran

only a handful of management contracts have sold at a loss over the past few years.

"You're really got to do the wrong thing for a property to sell for less than what you bought it for," he said, declaring that running high rise properties was a very stable and simple business.

"Unlike motels, we don't own the building. Our business is structured on cost-plus, so whatever it costs us, we put on a margin and charge it to the apartment owners."

"The apartments are negatively geared and we basically make our profit looking after investment properties."

"That's why it is positive cash flow from day one," he added.

Woodside work

WOODSIDE Petroleum has awarded a \$700 million maintenance contract to WorleyParsons and Transfield Services.

The three-year agreement covers Woodside's Australian assets including the Karratha LNG plant, the North Rankin A and Goodwyn A production platforms on the North West Shelf, and the new Otway gas plant.

WorleyParsons and Transfield already have about 800 people providing maintenance and engineering services to Woodside, and expect to increase that to 1200 as a result of the new contract.