

Free Wi-Fi facilities proposed for CBD

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THE Launceston City Council will next month consider installing free wireless internet facilities in the city centre.

Alderman will not meet again until January 27 when they are expected to decide whether to support the offering of free Wi-Fi for 30 minutes a day in the Brisbane Street Mall, Civic Square and The Avenue.

The council's information-technology manager Andrew Gall, in a report to aldermen, has estimated that equipment installation would cost \$12,500.

He said there would be a \$2500 initial charge and a \$6700 annual charge if the service was provided by a third party.

Mr Gall said the council could in the future extend the Wi-Fi service to the Quadrant, Inveresk and City Park.

The Hobart City, Devonport, Central Coast, West Coast and Meander Valley councils provide public Wi-Fi to residents and visitors who can use the internet without attracting exorbitant international roaming charges.

Free Wi-Fi services are emerging increasingly in Tasmanian cafes and eateries as mobile technology use grows.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority research last year found 9.2 million Australians went online through their mobile phones and 4.4 million through a tablet over six months.

Wireless internet manufacturer Ruckus Wireless reported that there had been a 32 per cent jump in Australians using a Wi-Fi hot spot.

Mr Gall said the council would need to consider how to control access to its service so it best supported local business and tourism attractions.

“The service would not, for example, be intended to support local residents or businesses to refresh their downloaded movie collection,” he said.