



Hot Products - Vodafone launches Local Zone

If you own a 3G mobile and resent paying Telecom \$50 a month just to have a landline at home, you might want to step into a Vodafone store today and sign up for Local zone.

The first of the much-trumpeted location-based services to be launched, Local zone puts a landline number on your mobile in addition to your mobile number. You simply replace your existing SIM card with a new 256K SIM and then set up your Local zone based on cell-tower triangulation. Once the zone is set up, your mobile becomes your landline when you enter your Local zone, and when you leave it becomes your mobile again. Of course, your mobile is always still your mobile if anyone rings you on your mobile number.

You can port your existing landline number and the basic service costs \$20 per month, including free local calling. National calls are charged at 20c per minute and capped at \$2.50 per call for up to two hours. If you want unlimited local and national calling the plan costs \$40 per month.

On the \$20 plan you receive a text message informing you that someone rang your landline number, when you're outside of your local zone. Alternatively, for an additional \$30 per month you can have all landline calls diverted to your mobile.

Of course, the reason many people keep a landline at home is so they can have wired broadband. In this regard, Vodafone is offering \$10 a month discounts on its 3G Broadband plans (that operate over the mobile network). However, if you're serious about broadband, you're probably better served to opt for one of the new "naked" DSL plans from the likes of Orcon or Vodafone's new RED network.

Local zone is in addition to any existing mobile plan you have in place, and, no, you can't ditch your mobile plan to have just Local zone. You can also only set up your Local zone once. That means you can't just change your Local zone to your office address when you arrive at work each morning, and then change it back at night.

If you move houses within your local calling area you can get your Local zone changed accordingly with just a phone call to Vodafone, and, unlike the usual wait for Telecom, it will be changed the same day. If, however, you move to a new town or city you will have to pay a \$40 re-connection fee and your landline number will change.

Vodafone general manager of Products and Services, Kursten Shalfoon, sees the Local zone service as being perfect for tradespeople or SOHO workers who want to ensure they are always contactable, no matter where they are. He also makes the point that the service is a lot cheaper than having a second business landline installed in your home.

For the present the service will operate with the Local zone landline number tied to a single mobile handset. This is because of the complexity of setting up the service (developed by [Seeker Wireless](#) of Australia) and the additional challenges

that having multiple handsets with a single landline number would throw up. Shalfoon is not, however, ruling out the possibility of extending the service in this way in the future.

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