



# Media release

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## The social network: nbn customers reflect on healthier, happier, more enriching quality of life

New research from Accenture<sup>1</sup>, commissioned by NBN Co, has found that a faster, higher capacity and more reliable **nbn** network is delivering an overwhelmingly positive impact on personal wellbeing, particularly in regional and remote Australia, with some of the greatest impacts helping to lift lower socioeconomic areas.

Three in four **nbn** customers believe that having a fast, reliable and secure **nbn** connection at home helps them to maintain and improve their overall satisfaction with life. Approximately 25 per cent of respondents reported that having the **nbn** at home had a strong positive impact on their lives in the last 12 months, and 50 per cent reported a moderate positive impact.

The many positive social impacts associated with **nbn** connectivity include:

- 82 per cent of **nbn** customers who accessed telehealth or online medical information, resources or records, reported that the **nbn** positively impacted their health outcomes;
- 82 per cent of **nbn** customers who engaged in online education from home reported that the **nbn**<sup>®</sup> network had positively impacted their education outcomes;
- **nbn** customers who connect with family and friends, or access news or community information online, reported the **nbn** network had positively impacted their social and community connectedness;
- 85 per cent of **nbn** customers who work, study, or access online services, believe that fast, reliable **nbn** services deliver positive sustainability and environmental outcomes by helping them to reduce their carbon emissions.

Researchers also found the economic impact derived from increases in average broadband speeds were 16 times greater in remote areas of Australia and twice as profound in regional areas relative to the impact in major cities.

The **nbn** network is also enabling positive impacts for low-income households, with 69 per cent reporting benefits to their satisfaction with life. Of those, 23 per cent reported a strong positive impact and 47 per cent reported a moderate positive impact.

The research also revealed the **nbn** network is supporting digital inclusion and helping unlock social benefits for First Nations people. It found that 74 per cent of First Nations people with the **nbn** network at home reported it having a positive impact on their satisfaction with life. Of those, 35 per cent reported a strong positive impact, and 39 per cent reported a moderate positive impact.

First Nations **nbn** customers also reported higher impacts on their social and community connections than the general population, with 80 per cent of First Nations **nbn** customers noting a positive impact, compared with 74 per cent of the overall population.

Wellbeing impacts in regional and remote Australia were similar to the national average, with 73 per cent saying that having the **nbn** network at home had a positive impact on their satisfaction with life. Of those, 28 per cent reported a strong positive impact, and 45 per cent reported a moderate positive impact.

The number of regional and remote **nbn** customers who said having fast **nbn** internet connectivity had helped them reduce their carbon emissions was higher, at 87 per cent, compared with 85 per cent nationally.

### **nbn network upgrades**

Through its ongoing network investment plan, **nbn** is committed to meeting the current and future needs of households, businesses and communities and also promoting digital inclusion and equitable access to reliable broadband services.

NBN Co's current network upgrade program has so far enabled more than 8.4 million residential and business premises, or 75 per cent of the **nbn** fixed line network, to access the **nbn** Home Ultrafast wholesale speed tier, which is capable of delivering access wholesale download speeds to 500 Mbps to close to 1 Gbps<sup>2,3</sup>. NBN Co is on target to enable 10.2 million premises, or up to 90 per cent of the **nbn** fixed line network, to access the **nbn** Home Ultrafast wholesale speed tier by the end of 2025.

In November 2023, NBN Co announced a proposal to increase the potential maximum information rate for the existing **nbn** Fixed Wireless Plus wholesale plan from up to 75/10 Mbps to up to 100/20 Mbps<sup>2,4,5</sup>. This change is planned for implementation in early to mid-2024 and would apply to all Fixed Wireless Plus services across the **nbn** Fixed Wireless network footprint.

The company is proposing to launch two additional fixed wireless wholesale high-speed tiers. Fixed Wireless Home Fast is planned to increase from a potential peak speed of 130/20 Mbps to 250/20 Mbps<sup>2,4,5</sup> and it is estimated that this product will be available to around 90 per cent of the **nbn** fixed wireless coverage area.

Fixed Wireless Superfast would increase from a potential peak speed of 325/20 Mbps to 400/40 Mbps<sup>2,4,5</sup> and it is estimated that this product will be available to around 80 per cent of the **nbn** fixed wireless coverage area. Subject to industry consultation, the company plans to start making these two enhanced speed tiers available from mid-2024.

In December 2023, the company also provided customers in regional and remote Australia access to uncapped internet data use<sup>5</sup> with the launch of new **nbn**<sup>®</sup> Sky Muster<sup>®</sup> Plus Premium satellite plans.

Based on these upgrades and the anticipated uptake of higher speed tiers, Accenture has projected that average download speeds across the **nbn** network will more than double by 2030, rising to more than 130 Mbps.

### **Stephen Rue, Chief Executive Officer at NBN Co, said:**

"By working to close the so-called digital divide through the delivery of ubiquitous broadband we are helping to improve social and economic participation, which is delivering positive social equity outcomes for people across Australia.

"We are delivering on our enduring purpose to lift the digital capability of Australia. The rapidly improving speed, capacity and reliability of our network is enabling access to essential online services, education, healthcare and general social connectivity and inclusion.

"Access to fast broadband has positive, measurable social impact on people across Australia and this is crucially important as the nation's everyday reliance on the internet continues to grow."

**ENDS**

### **Footnotes**

- 1 Research commissioned by **nbn**. The analysis was specifically focused on broadband delivered to premises (both **nbn** and non-**nbn** broadband) and did not seek to measure or take into account the economic or social impact that may have come from

mobile broadband. Although mobile networks account for only 13 per cent of downloads across retail **nbn**, non-**nbn** fixed and mobile networks in the June quarter of 2023 (ACCC Internet Activity Report for period ending 30 June 2023), the pattern of economic and social benefits set out in this report may change if mobile broadband was able to be explicitly included in the analysis.

- 2 An end customer's experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn**<sup>®</sup> network, depends on some factors outside **nbn**'s control (like equipment quality, software, and how a retail service provider designs its network) and the **nbn** technology used for the connection. Speeds may be impacted by network congestion on **nbn**'s Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods. Satellite users may experience latency.
- 3 Regardless of the retail service an end customer purchases, the actual wholesale speeds delivered by **nbn**'s highest wholesale speed tiers of 500 to close to 1000 Mbps will be less than 1 Gbps due to equipment and network limitations and the peak information rate may fall anywhere in this range. In addition, the HFC Home Ultrafast bandwidth profile downstream service provided to retail providers is a ranged profile with a maximum sustained information rate of 750 Mbps. References to speeds are not end customer speeds; they are wholesale layer 2 peak information rate bandwidth provided to retail providers. NBN Co provides wholesale services to phone and internet providers. **nbn**'s wholesale speed tiers available to providers vary depending on the access technology in an end users' area.
- 4 These are **nbn** wholesale speed tiers, which **nbn** provides to retail phone and internet providers. Attainable wholesale speeds are subject to the rollout of network upgrades and some premises will require **nbn** to complete upgrades to the equipment at the premises.
- 5 Your experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn** network, depends on the **nbn** network technology and configuration over which services are delivered to your premises, whether you are using the internet during the busy period, and some factors outside our control (like your equipment quality, software, broadband plans, signal reception and how your service provider designs its network). Speeds may be impacted by the number of concurrent users on **nbn**'s Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods.

## Media enquiries

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## Resources

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