

CommsDay Wholesale Congress 2023 – Anna Perrin speech as part of the nbn Showcase

Introduction

Well I hope that got you interested for our **nbn** showcase.

But firstly thank you Grahame and the CommsDay team for again putting on a such a remarkable event and bringing us all together. CommsDay has been a must attend, must read for me and I know for many of you, for years now – you know your old when the ten years ago today section, doesn't feel that long ago!

Back to today and to the future, this Showcase we'll give you a glimpse into what's next for nbn. And I hope at the end of it you will take away three things -

- **nbn** is staying ahead of the massive increase in demand for data.
- fibre is the future – and will power our digital economy for decades to come,
and
- everyone in this room will achieve amazing things – if we all work together.

Because, this is an amazing moment in **nbn**'s short history and we want everyone in this room to part of it.

We've built a truly national network from scratch in a just decade, one that came into its own during COVID and emerged even stronger, and more resilient and reliable.

As of the end of the last financial year we had –

- 12.29 million households and small businesses who were able to connect to the network
- 8.56 million households and small businesses who had connected to the network

- and 6.9 million households and businesses able to order our fastest residential speeds.

But you've seen nothing yet, within two years

- 10 million Australian households and small businesses will be able to order plans approaching gigabit speeds.
- Fixed wireless will be available in more places previously served by nbn satellite, with faster speeds than ever before, and
- the future of our satellite service could look very different.

Those changes are not nice to haves, they are necessities as technology transforms our way of life.

In the last six years, we've seen data use triple in this country, and we expect that exponential growth to continue at pace.

Across Australia, homes have an average of 21 connected devices, in a few years that will be closer to 30. That number may seem high, but start counting all of yours – I did the same just last week and had a surprise. With two teenage boys and fairly geeky partner, I found out that along with the Xbox, connected kettle and doorbell, even my garden hose has now joined our IOT ecosystem.

And one thing is very clear – data usage is only going in one direction – and that is up.

We commissioned research to find out how Australians see their homes of the future - and they told us their appetite for data hungry applications will only grow.

Top of the list was home security and all that includes –

- security cameras,
- motion sensors,
- smart locks, and
- kids GPS trackers

And the culture change caused by COVID continues to play a big part in people's plans.

Take healthcare for example, in 2019 just two percent of doctor consultations were delivered via telehealth, this leapt to nearly 50 per cent at the height of the pandemic.

And telehealth continues to be popular with 8.3 million consultations in the second quarter of 2023.

Australians are also using technology to undertake health care in the home, monitoring blood pressure, daily glucose levels, weight, and other medical data.

And when you add all the other things Australians expect to install in their homes you get this result – a need for speed, and a desire for data that will reshape our industry.

And nbn is building network capacity, ahead of this demand curve. We are allowing Australians to reimagine their work, their family time, their health care, their entertainment, their garden watering systems and their every way of life.

And the good news is, the thin fibre cable that carries all data around the country and around the world is only using a fraction of what it's capable of.

Later in this session Rob Joyce will outline exactly how much more we can get out of fibre – I think it could surprise you.

So, fibre is the future – today, tomorrow and for decades to come, driving our economy, education, entertainment, health care and communities.

And with the exponential growth of new technology like Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and AI the capacity and ubiquity of our network for Australia is essential.

AI in particular is going to require massive amounts of real-time data both in the upload and download – as consumers and businesses alike leverage AI to drive very new ways of working and engaging with content.

Don't limit your thinking here to the current text based examples like ChatGPT - full image and video conversations will become the norm – think asking your AI assistant to produce your next internal comms message as an episode of the Simpsons – and it delivers it to you in seconds via the nbn.

But to take full advantage of these new technologies and the opportunities they offer nbn needs to continue to upgrade, expand and improve ahead of the data consumption curve.

We officially finished the build in 2020 – and that's provided a firm foundation for what's to come.

As we meet in this room today there are upgrades underway right across the country.

Our fibre rollout is our biggest investment and by the time we finish it in 2025, along with HFC, up to 90 per cent of fixed line homes and small businesses will be able to order our fastest residential speeds.

Speaking of HFC, we also continue to invest to drive improvements in terms of reliability and performance for that part of the network.

The expansion is not restricted to fixed footprint - our Fixed Wireless network will expand by up to 50 per cent, enabling approximately 120,000 former satellite-only premises to access those new services.

While those people still on Sky Muster can now enjoy a Plus Premium plan which gives homes and small businesses access to a better service and uncapped data, something people in the bush have told us they need.

Our satellite customers demanded improved speeds and more data so they can better work from home, as well as enjoy video streaming, online education and remote healthcare.

And that's what we're delivering.

Why are these upgrades important to Australia?

Because they will allow many more Australians to enjoy the benefits of an even better **nbn** network.

The good news is – small and medium businesses can now tap into the benefits as well – with the launch of our new business fibre product.

I won't go into details because Brendan Donohue will talk about it – but I'll say this – it's designed for business and it includes the service a business expects.

And as more fibre rolls out, more small and medium businesses will be able to use it.

Complimenting our Enterprise Ethernet offering for big business, we are providing the solutions to deal with massive data quickly, efficiently and effectively.

Allowing Australia's leading businesses to compete with the rest of the world.

But we can't do this alone..

At the centre of this next era is the need for **nbn** and our partners to come together to deliver on this promise, with a laser focus on customer experience. To do this effectively, it's important for **nbn** to partner exceptionally and seamlessly with our retail service provider partners.

While the revised SAU was the discussion we had to have – it has taken considerable time, and by its very nature it created some friction between **nbn** and the rest of the industry.

During this period, there hasn't been much space to truly partner.

But thankfully, that's now been resolved, and we can work much more closely to get the outcomes which benefit all of us.

Since my first day as nbn's Chief Customer Officer 7 months ago, my number one priority has been to understand what the industry needs from nbn.

I have spent time with our partners, including many of you, to hear your views

- You told me we have too many products.

- You told me we could be difficult to deal with.
- You told me we create too much work for you.
- You told me we need to better focus on the customer.
- You told me we need to continue to invest in fibre

Since then, my team and I have made it our mission to try and address these concerns and whilst there is still a lot to do, we have already made some progress.

For example,

- We have designed dedicated teams for our Retail Service Provider partners who work with you to offer better transparency, working relationships and more immediate responses to issues, opportunities, as well as better support overall.
- We are reviewing the way we communicate, so we are clearer and more concise.
- We are working harder to prioritise what you need, versus what **nbn** thinks you need.
- We have endeavoured to ensure executive relationships and alignment are in place. We may not always agree, but being in the room to debate and understand each other's point of view is key.
- And we are improving tooling for customers and retail service providers, to automate more and to be more transparent. Our new website is just one example of that.

Do we have a lot more to do? Absolutely.

Although I think we are already seeing some positive signs that some of those measures are working.

Our overall reputation in the wider Australian community continues to improve, and something I am personally really pleased to see is that consumer complaints to TIO have never been lower.

So, we are headed in the right direction.

And by all of us working together we can deliver value for households and businesses around Australia.

If we simplify, focus on the customer, and drive innovation we will create the conditions to maximise the benefits of the massive changes we are seeing in technology.

That will not only be good for our industry, it will be critical for the future of this country.

And someone who has a big role to play in that will be Brendan Donohue, **nbn**'s Executive General Manager of Sales – he's the next speaker on this Showcase – please give him a warm welcome.

[Hand over to Brendan]