



Media release

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Older Australians fastest-growing online learners

nbn™ connected Australians are twice as likely to enrol in online learning courses

Australians over the age of 65 are the fastest-growing new adopters of non-formal online education. New research reveals they are heading online in droves to watch tutorials, complete new courses and learn new languages.

Commissioned by NBN Co, the *Connecting Australia* report, using research from AlphaBeta's first national economic and social study of the impact of the nbn™ broadband access network, reveals nbn™ connected users are twice as likely to be enrolled in an online course than non-nbn™ connected users, and are also more likely to enrol in online courses in the future.

Key online-learning findings include:

- *Silver surfers*: almost four out of five over-65-year-old nbn™ connected users are engaged in non-formal education, compared with just over one in two non-nbn™ connected users.
- *Mid-Life online learners*: nbn™ connected users aged 45 to 64 are 1.4 times more likely to use the internet for learning online compared to those in non-nbn™ connected areas.
- *Adult learners*: for groups aged 25 to 44, the proportion of people using the internet for online learning in nbn™ -connected areas is 1.3 times greater than those in non-nbn™ -connected areas. For people aged 16 to 24, that proportion is 1.2 times greater for internet users in nbn™ connected areas than those in non-nbn™ connected regions.
- *Learning for all ages*: 32 per cent of users connected to the nbn™ access network spend at least one hour a day on the internet on non-formal learning, compared to only 20 per cent of non-nbn™ connected users.
- *City clickers*: in metro areas, nbn™ connected users are 1.5 times more likely to use the internet for non-formal learning than non-nbn™ connected users.
- *Country classrooms*: regional nbn™ connected users are 1.8 times more likely to use the internet for non-formal learning compared with regional non-nbn™ connected users. Regional nbn™ connected users are also 1.4 times more likely to express interest in enrolling in online education in the future, compared to metro nbn™ connected users who are, 1.2 times more likely compared to their non-nbn™ connected city counterparts.

A significant increase in online education, attributed to the nbn's™ access network impact on workers' productivity, is estimated to boost the Australian economy by up to \$1.7 billion in 2021.

NBN Co's Chief Executive Officer Bill Morrow said:

"With almost two-thirds of all Australian homes now available to connect to the nbn™ access network, we are helping to provide more Australians, regardless of age or postcode, the opportunity to continue to learn online.



“Whether it’s an online formal university course or simply a ‘how-to’ YouTube video, the **nbn**[™] access network will help give all Australians the opportunity to continue to learn, whenever and wherever they want. This will open up many opportunities, particularly for people located in regional areas.”

Council on the Ageing Australia’s Chief Executive Ian Yates said:

“Digital connectivity is an increasingly important part of life for older Australians and our aim is to ensure older people are included in all aspects of Australian life.

“It has always been a concern that the digital world could be isolating for older Australians, but it is great to see evidence that many are utilising services over the **nbn**[™] access network to make the most of new opportunities to learn online and upskill after their retirement years.”

Good Things Foundation’s National Director Jessica Wilson said:

“It is very promising that so many older Australians are engaging with online learning, but we know there is still more work to do to make sure that all older Australians have the support they need to learn new skills.

“The Be Connected Network of over 1,500 community organisations across the country are there to support older Australians to have the confidence, knowledge and the skills to engage with the digital world. Clearly, having access to the internet is also important and the **nbn**[™] access network will play a key role in enabling this.”

For more information about the report, [visit the *Connecting Australia* website.](#)

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Notes to editors:

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development defines non-formal learning as learning that lies between formal and informal learning (i.e. somewhat organised and can have learning objectives).
- The *Connecting Australia* report was commissioned by NBN Co in 2017 through independent research agency AlphaBeta. It combines national census data with an Ipsos survey of 3500 individuals across 1700 postcodes in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, including those connected to the **nbn**[™] access network and those not connected.
- An **nbn**[™] access network end user is defined as an individual who has a home internet connection and lives in a suburb/postcode where the **nbn**[™] access network is, at least, 90 per cent rolled out. A non-



nbn[™] access network end user is an individual who does not have a home internet connection or lives in a suburb/postcode where the **nbn**[™] access network is, at most, 10 per cent rolled out.