

Media release

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NBN set to narrow digital divide for 400,000 homes and businesses

Fast broadband to help kids in the bush from falling behind

Access to faster broadband in remote and regional Australia is one step closer, as the company building the National Broadband Network (NBN) today announced construction work is complete on all ten of its satellite ground stations.

These stations will act as a backbone to help deliver NBN services to around 400,000 Australian homes and businesses via two of the biggest telecommunications satellites in the world – a crucial component designed to level the playing field between city and bush.

The news follows a recent Akamai report which ranked Australian Internet speeds at 44th globally, suggesting many schools, businesses and homes in remote areas are at risk of falling behind in a vastly competitive digital world.

Comparing example download times for simple web-based classroom activities undertaken using a service over the NBN vs dial-up Internet shows the extent of this gap:

Task	Time taken using average dial-up (example 56Kps download / 33Kps upload)	Time taken using high speed broadband service over the NBN (example 25Mbps download / 5Mbps upload)
1. Download a movie	3 days 10 hours	10 minutes
2. Upload a podcast	8 hours 30 minutes	3 minutes 21 seconds
3. Download a YouTube video	1 hour 33 minutes	11 seconds
4. Open a webpage	58 seconds	0.13 seconds

NBN Co's Satellite Architect, Julia Dickinson said many people in bigger cities take for granted the benefits that fast broadband provides.

“With no access to any other form of commercial broadband service, some rural and regional Australians are still using dial-up Internet – the NBN is designed to provide access to minimum download speeds which could be up to **100 times faster** than what they are experiencing now.”

“Not only are those in remote areas physically removed from some essential services such as access to education and health specialists, a slow Internet connection can further disadvantage them from the benefits enjoyed by their inner-city cousins.”

“The NBN satellite service will play a critical role in helping Australians to be on a level playing field as everyone in the bush will have access to speeds that are as good as if not better than what many people in the city have today. No matter where you live, no home, school or business will be left behind.”

Federal President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, Judy Newton, said the completion of the ground stations meant kids in the bush were another step closer to having access to better learning opportunities.

“Country kids are just as intrigued with the world of technology as their urban counterparts and with all distance education schools in Australia now providing lessons over the Internet, it is vital that these children have access to fast broadband. They eagerly await the launch of the new NBN satellite services to help them overcome issues such as slow speeds and drop outs, which they struggle with on a daily basis,” she said.

To mark this milestone, NBN Co is launching the ‘Shoot for the Stars’ competition to give Aussie school kids aged 5-12 the opportunity to decorate the nose cone of the rocket which will launch the first satellite into space. In addition, the grand prize winner and their school will have the opportunity to name the satellite, etching their place in history.

“As the future beneficiaries of fast broadband, we’re encouraging children and their schools to be part of this groundbreaking initiative by asking them to help us name the first satellite and decorate its rocket’s nose cone,” Ms Dickinson said.

For entry details and terms and conditions on the ‘Shoot for the Stars’ competition please visit nbnco.com.au/stars

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Media materials:

[Click here](#) to download supporting video, audio and image files.

Notes to editors:

- *NBN Co is committed to fulfilling the Australian Government’s policy goal of ensuring all Australians have access to fast broadband as soon and as cost-effectively as possible.*
- *NBN Co’s strategic goals include connecting eight million premises to fast broadband and achieving annual revenue of \$4 billion by 2020.*
- *NBN Co’s first satellite is expected to launch from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou, French Guiana later this year followed by the expected commercial availability of its Long Term Satellite Service (LTSS) in 2016.*
- *The LTSS will deliver wholesale broadband speeds of up to 25 Mbps download and 5 Mbps upload. The service will be offered to:*
 - *400, 000 homes and businesses;*
 - *3% of Australia;*
 - *1,600 public buildings including 1,400 schools.*
- *The exact number of premises as well as the regions covered in by LTSS may vary once NBN Co has finalised its construction planning.*
- *NBN Co’s satellite ground stations are located in:*
 - *NSW: Bourke, Wolumla, Broken Hill*

- WA: Carnarvon, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Waroona
- QLD: Roma
- TAS: Geeveston
- SA: Ceduna
- Your experience including the speeds actually achieved over the NBN depends on the technology over which services are delivered to your premises and some factors outside our control like your equipment quality, software, broadband plans and how your service provider designs its network.
- Australia ranks 44th globally when it comes to average Internet connection speeds according to the Akamai Third Quarter, 2014 State of the Internet Report.
- The latest ABS data shows that as of June 2014 there are 182,000 Australian Internet users receiving speeds of 256kbps or less – <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/8153.0Main%20Features2June%202014?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=8153.0&issue=June%202014&num=&view=>
- Speed test example:
 1. A two hour Netflix movie would take around 2GB of data <https://help.netflix.com/en/node/87>
 2. A 2 hour podcast with 128Kbps bitrate contains 120MB of data on dial-up 33Kbps vs. a high speed 5Mbps upload <http://create.blubrry.com/manual/creating-podcast-media/audio/mp3-mpeg-layer-3-tips/>
 3. Based on a five minute You Tube video, running at 720p, file size of around 37.5MB <http://www.amaysim.com.au/mobile-plans/amaysim-mobile-broadband/mobile-data-plans-what-size-data-plan-do-i-need/what-you-can-do-with-1gb-mobile-data-plan.html>
 4. Vodafone advises that a general webpage requires 400KB of data (0.4MB) <http://www.vodafone.com.au/personal/mobile-internet/data-guide>
- Example is based on average Australian dial-up speed of 56Kbps <http://go.bigpond.com/services/connect-roam/dial-up-for-broadband/>