



NBN: A Guide for Consumers

NBN: Fast Facts

- The National Broadband Network (NBN) is public utility infrastructure that will provide all premises in Australia with phone and internet access.
- It is being built by NBN Co Limited – a wholly Government-owned company.
- You will still buy your phone and internet service from providers such as Telstra, Optus, iiNet, Primus and TPG. You won't deal with NBN Co except during the first-time installation at your property.
- The NBN will replace the existing telecommunications network. This means if you want to keep making phone calls and accessing the internet through a landline service, your property will need to be connected to the NBN.
- The NBN will consist of fibre-optic cable to 93% of premises. The remaining 7% of premises mostly in rural and remote areas will get fixed wireless or satellite connections.
- The existing network will be disconnected around 18 months after the NBN becomes available in your area. (In wireless and satellite areas, the existing network will be maintained for around 20 years.)
- Having your property connected to the NBN doesn't mean you have to sign up immediately for a phone or internet service if you don't want to.
- If you are happy with your existing phone handset, in most cases you can keep it.
- When the NBN contractors come to your street, a small connection box will be attached to the outside of your premises. If you sign up for a service which uses the NBN, your service provider will arrange for a Network Termination Device or "NBN box" to be installed inside your premises.
- In apartment blocks, some equipment will be installed in a central location such as a basement and then each apartment will have its own NBN box.
- The NBN will be used first for the internet and for carrying phone calls, with more services such as TV, movies, video telephony, smart metering and health monitoring becoming available in the future.



1. So what is the NBN?

The National Broadband Network, known as the “NBN”, is a telecommunications network being constructed by [NBN Co Limited](#), a company set up by the Commonwealth Government in 2009.

The NBN gives everyone access to high-speed broadband. It is expected that the NBN will be fully completed by 2021.

2. What will the NBN be used for?

The NBN is public utility infrastructure that will cover all premises. Think of it as similar to the power grid. A hundred years ago, the first electricity network was built for one purpose: street lighting. Much later, it started being used for indoor lighting in homes. Later still, it started being used for new appliances like electric stoves, heaters and refrigerators.

In the same way, the NBN will first be used for high-speed access to the internet and for phone calls. But soon it will start being used for a range of other services which are separate from the internet. In the future you may get TV delivered over the NBN, or you might have video consultations with your doctor, or a range of other in-home services.

3. What is the technology?

NBN Co will use three types of technology to deliver broadband to all Australians:

- Fibre-optic cable capable of providing speeds of up to one gigabit per second (Gbps) to 93% of premises;
- Fixed wireless and satellite connections capable of providing peak speeds of up to 25 megabits per second (Mbps) to 7% of premises.

Fixed wireless and satellite will be used mostly in rural and remote areas.

4. How does installation happen?

Step 1 – Connection Box outside: When the NBN is being constructed in your area, NBN Co will send you a notice letting you know when the connection box will be installed on the outside of your property. Generally you won’t need to be home for this installation.

Step 2 – NBN Box inside: After the connection box is installed, you can contact your preferred phone or internet service provider to order services over the NBN.

Your service provider will arrange for a Network Termination Device or “NBN box” to be installed inside your premises. If you are a tenant, you will be asked to sign that you have obtained your landlord’s consent.



5. Will I deal with NBN Co?

NBN Co won't deal directly with consumers except during the first-time installation. NBN Co deals with service providers and is required to allow all service providers to plug into the network for the same price.

6. Will I need a back-up battery?

NBN Co will provide a back-up battery to people who want it. This back-up battery will power a regular phone (not a cordless) for up to five hours in the event of a power failure and also some other devices that use the data ports. (A back-up battery will always be provided to Priority Assistance customers.)

It is important to note that many people have cordless phone handsets that already rely on the mains power. You can continue to use these but the NBN Co back-up battery won't power these phones in the event of a power failure.

7. Will fibre cables be installed overhead or underground?

If your current phone lines are underground then the NBN fibre cables will probably also be underground. If your current phone lines are overhead then the fibre will probably also be installed overhead. NBN Co will make these decisions on a case-by-case basis, so we can't be sure what will happen in each case until the rollout is more advanced.

8. What if I live in an apartment or other multi-dwelling unit?

In general, NBN Co will install fibre to every dwelling it can. Because there is a lot of variation in the layout and facilities in apartment buildings, the installers will check the buildings in advance and figure out the best way.

In some apartment buildings, they may need to install equipment in a central location, such as the basement of the building. This equipment will be owned by NBN Co, not by the building owner.

To connect premises in strata units, NBN Co will get permission from body corporates.

9. Should I connect now or later?

There are advantages in having the connection to your premises done at the time the network is first being rolled out. Advantages may include:

- Saving money on the installation. Standard installations are **free** during the initial rollout. It is uncertain whether people will have to pay if they decide to connect later
- Avoiding hassles. Remember that around 18 months after the NBN fibre-optic cable is rolled out in your area, the existing copper-wire telephone network will be disconnected. When that happens, being connected to the NBN will be the only way to have a landline phone or internet service. To ensure you have an uninterrupted service, it makes sense to be connected at the start.



Want to know more? The full report, *NBN: A Guide for Consumers*, can be found at www.accan.org.au/NBNGuide

ACCAN is the peak body that represents all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. We provide a strong, unified voice to industry and government as we work towards availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians.

The Internet Society of Australia (ISOC-AU) is a non-profit society founded in 1996 which promotes Internet development in Australia for the whole community – private, academic and business users. ISOC-AU is a chapter of the worldwide Internet Society and is a peak body organisation, representing the interests of Internet users in this country.