



SENATOR THE HON MATHIAS CORMANN

Minister for Finance
Leader of the Government in the Senate

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$150 million NBN assistance for families and businesses

The Morrison Government has today announced that NBN Co will provide \$150 million in financial relief to internet providers so they can assist Australian families and businesses in accessing the National Broadband Network (NBN) during COVID-19.

Finance Minister, Mathias Cormann, said NBN Co's COVID-19 relief fund is a substantial investment in the connectivity of Australians – particularly for low-income families with school-aged children – at a critical time for our nation.

“This package is targeted at supporting low-income households that have school-aged children, and provides financial hardship relief for residential customers and small and medium sized businesses,” Minister Cormann said.

\$50 million in funding is to be allocated to help connect low-income families with school-aged children so they can access the internet for educational purposes. NBN Co will waive the \$37 monthly wholesale charge, paid for by internet providers, for many services on the 25/5 Mbps speed tier plan available from April until September. This is an opt-in scheme for internet providers. Participating providers will have their corresponding retail offering assessed by an internal panel at NBN Co to ensure that low-income families will have access to the most cost effective NBN packages.

“This is intended to help make education accessible to all Australian students who are home schooling in response to social distancing measures,” said Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP.

A further \$50 million will be allocated to support households experiencing financial hardship due to the challenges presented by the coronavirus. Financial relief will be provided by NBN Co to internet providers so that they can maintain NBN connections for households that are unable to pay some or all of their bills.

NBN Co is also making \$50 million available to support small and medium businesses. Relief measures will include waiving wholesale monthly costs paid by internet providers for businesses facing COVID-19 related financial hardship, and providing internet providers with discounted access to new business-grade services until 31 January next year.

NBN Co will offer internet providers enhanced service levels and priority connections and fault resolutions for essential and emergency services, including telehealth providers. These measures complement the GP clinic speed boost to support for enhanced telehealth services announced by Minister Fletcher last week.

“The internet is incredibly important in connecting us to loved ones, enabling education, and allowing us to run our businesses and stay productive from home. Of course, the coronavirus crisis has presented extremely difficult financial and economic challenges for many Australian families and businesses and access to affordable broadband is more important than ever. NBN Co’s relief fund will provide a helping hand to many Australians so they stay online through the challenging times ahead,” Minister Fletcher said.

“We welcome NBN Co’s initiative in making these offers available to internet providers, some of which have already introduced COVID-19 customer support measures. We expect and encourage all internet providers to pass the benefits of NBN Co’s relief measures on to end users of the service.”

The measures announced today follow an expedited industry consultation led by NBN Co involving more than 50 internet providers, Government and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN).

NBN Co also [recently announced](#) new initiatives to provide retailers with 40 per cent additional bandwidth at no extra charge across all NBN Co access technologies and additional broadband data for Sky Muster satellite customers in rural and remote Australia during COVID-2019.

For more information on NBN Co’s financial relief measures visit: www.nbnco.com.au

Media contact:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Karen Wu | 0428 350 139 | Karen.Wu@finance.gov.au