



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

SENATOR THE HON BRIDGET MCKENZIE

Minister for Emergency Management, National Recovery and Resilience
Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education

SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM

Minister for Finance
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Senator for South Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Major Budget boost for NBN fixed wireless network

Up to one million premises in regional, rural, and remote Australia and in peri-urban areas will have access to higher speeds on NBN fixed wireless services or greater data limits on Sky Muster services as part of the Morrison Government's plan for a stronger future.

The Government is investing \$480 million, recognising the importance of investing in critical infrastructure such as the NBN to meet the demands of our growing economy and help Australia reach our goal of becoming a top ten data and digital economy by 2030.

“By using the latest 4G and 5G wireless technology, this upgrade will extend the coverage range from a tower, and allow higher speed services to everyone served by the tower,” said Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP.

“This means more people can be served by NBN fixed wireless; it means higher speed services on the NBN fixed wireless network; and it means higher amounts of data can be used by households and business customers. The upgrade will expand the fixed wireless footprint coverage by up to 50 per cent, enabling 120,000 additional premises to access fixed wireless services instead of Sky Muster satellite services,” Minister Fletcher said.

The total cost of this network upgrade is \$750 million, with the remaining \$270 million being contributed by NBN Co out of its own funds.

This upgrade will see NBN offer new higher speed services to the fixed wireless network: 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) to all 750,000 premises able to access the new, expanded coverage footprint, and a 250 Mbps service will be available to 85 per cent of premises.

It also means much higher actual speeds during the “network busy hour” – the time of day when the network is most heavily used, typically around 8:00 pm. The network design metric for the busy hour today is 6 Mbps; following the upgrade, the typical average speed in the busy period is expected to

rise to at least 50 Mbps. This means customers will benefit even if they do not order a higher speed plan, as they will experience a sharp increase in the actual speed of their current plan.

This upgrade also means big benefits for NBN satellite users. Because some existing NBN satellite customers will move to fixed wireless, this will free up capacity on the satellite network.

As a result, NBN Co will be able to offer an almost immediate increase in average data allowances for NBN Sky Muster satellite users. Average monthly data allowances for standard Sky Muster plans will increase to 55 Gigabytes (GB) in the short term, increasing to 90GB once the fixed wireless upgrade is complete in around two years' time.

Minister for Regional Communications, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, said the investment would drive major improvements to regional telecommunications quality, helping to bridge the digital divide many Australian communities often face.

“The NBN is a critical part of our national infrastructure and economy, enabling employment, connecting families, and supporting business.

“This investment provides a comprehensive response to Recommendation 6 of the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review, and is one part of a suite of measures we will announce as part of the Liberal and National Government’s response to the Review in coming weeks,” Minister McKenzie said.

Minister for Finance Simon Birmingham said this \$480 million funding boost in major network upgrades would significantly improve services to customers, particularly those in regional and peri-urban areas.

“This is another important investment in the NBN that will deliver better and faster internet to Australian households and businesses across the fixed wireless network,” Minister Birmingham said.

“The NBN has been there to support Australians throughout the pandemic. Our Government will continue to make critical investments in the NBN that will enhance the internet experience for households and businesses right now and into the future.

“With faster internet and more data available, these improved services will directly benefit premises already using NBN fixed wireless and satellite services, and particularly the approximately 50, 000 regional businesses with active fixed wireless services.”

The 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review was chaired by the Hon Luke Hartsuyker with four other committee members: Ms Sue Middleton; Ms Kristy Sparrow; Professor Hugh Bradlow; and Mr Michael Cosgrave.

The Committee’s report, titled *Step Change in Demand*, was presented to the Australian Government in December 2021 and tabled in parliament on 14 February 2022.

For more detail on the Hartsuyker Review and the Committee’s report, a *Step Change in Demand*, visit <https://www.rtrc.gov.au/>

For more detail on NBN Co’s fixed wireless network, visit <https://www.nbnco.com.au/learn/network-technology/fixed-wireless-explained>

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