



Media release

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Boom town: Accenture research correlates faster, stronger nbn with greater regional workforce participation

New economic research from Accenture¹ has revealed that a faster, higher capacity **nbn**[®] network is helping to profoundly change Australia's workforce demographics, particularly for those escaping Australia's major cities for a sea change, tree change or outer suburban lifestyle.

Accenture found 'the **nbn** has overwhelmingly benefitted households and businesses in remote and regional areas.' Researchers also found that 'faster broadband² has also been an equaliser of opportunity for Australians in lower socio-economic communities.' It found that the most disadvantaged communities experienced up to five times the productivity boost when compared to more advantaged communities.

The research notes that the underlying value of broadband in connecting people is more powerful in geographically isolated regions because it improves the ability to launch and operate online businesses or engage in well-paid corporate employment while working from home full-time or for a portion of the week.

Accenture estimates that higher average broadband speeds enabled by the **nbn** has supported the creation of 169,000 jobs throughout Australia in the ten-year period from 2012 to 2022, equivalent to 1 per cent increase of Australia's labour force. Over the forecast period from 2023 to 2030, Accenture estimates that higher average broadband speeds will support the creation of 113,000 additional jobs, bringing the total number of **nbn** supported employment opportunities to around 282,000 jobs.

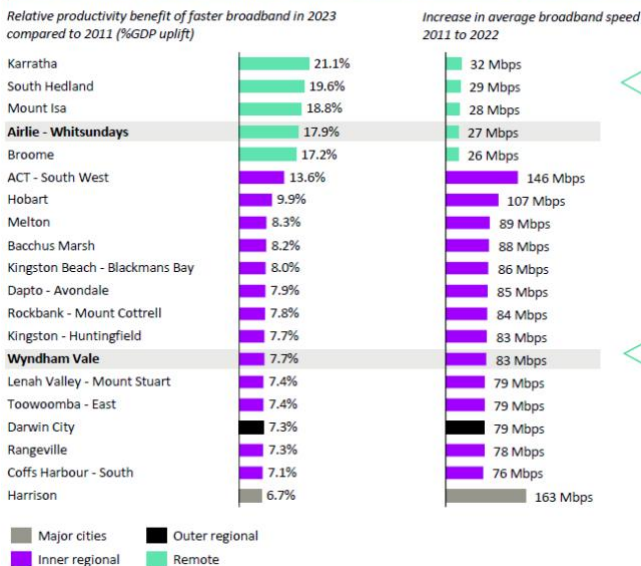
Accenture also estimates that over the last ten years, the **nbn** has created a 1.5 times stronger impact on female employment relative to male employment, with the enablement of approximately 101,000 new job opportunities for women compared to approximately 68,000 new job opportunities for men.

Researchers say the greater productivity benefits accruing to women are associated with improved access to more flexible working arrangements and online education, greater access to online services and stronger female participation in sectors such as professional, scientific and technical services, and finance and insurance, with these industries faster to embrace the benefits of remote working and cloud computing.

In 2011, prior to the **nbn** rollout, only 55 per cent of households in regional and remote communities were connected to home broadband and average download speeds were 9 Mbps. By 2023 the number of regional and remote households that have chosen to connect to home broadband had grown to 77 per cent and average download speeds were 53 Mbps.

Accenture found that of the top 20 regions that experienced the biggest productivity benefits from faster broadband speeds, the majority are classed as regional or remote:

Top 20 local geographical communities with the largest relative productivity uplift



Consider **Airlie - Whitsundays**, which is located on the Great Barrier Reef in north east Queensland and has a population of 15,100.

- Average broadband speeds increased from 6 Mbps in 2011 to 33 Mbps in 2023 (an increase of 27 Mbps)
- In 2023, GRP per capita was \$77,600 and we estimate this is **17.9% higher** due to the impact of faster broadband in the region.



Consider **Wyndham Vale**, which is located 31km south-west of Melbourne and has a population of **24,400**.

- Average broadband speeds increased from 10 Mbps in 2011 to 93 Mbps in 2023 (an increase of 83 Mbps)
- In 2023, GRP per capita was \$17,400 and we estimate this is **7.7% higher** due to the impact of faster broadband.

NBN Co's current network upgrade program has so far enabled more than 8.4 million residential and business premises, or 75 per cent of the **nbn** fixed line network, to access the **nbn** Home Ultrafast wholesale speed tier, which is capable of delivering access wholesale download speeds to 500 Mbps to close to 1 Gbps^{3,4}. NBN Co is on target to enable 10.2 million premises, or up to 90 per cent of the **nbn** fixed line network, to access the **nbn** Home Ultrafast wholesale speed tier by the end of 2025.

In November 2023, NBN Co announced a proposal to increase the potential maximum information rate for the existing **nbn** Fixed Wireless Plus wholesale plan from up to 75/10 Mbps to up to 100/20 Mbps^{3,5,6}. This change is planned for implementation in early to mid-2024 and would apply to all Fixed Wireless Plus services across the **nbn** Fixed Wireless network footprint.

The company is proposing to launch two additional fixed wireless wholesale high-speed tiers. Fixed Wireless Home Fast is planned to increase from a potential peak speed of 130/20 Mbps to 250/20 Mbps^{3,5,6} and it is estimated that this product will be available to around 90 per cent of the **nbn** fixed wireless coverage area.

Fixed Wireless Superfast would increase from a potential peak speed of 325/20 Mbps to 400/40 Mbps^{3,5,6} and it is estimated that this product will be available to around 80 per cent of the **nbn** fixed wireless coverage area. Subject to industry consultation, the company plans to start making these two enhanced speed tiers available from mid-2024.

In December 2023, the company also provided customers in regional and remote Australia access to uncapped internet data use⁶ with the launch of new **nbn**[®] Sky Muster[®] Plus Premium satellite plans.

From 2012 to 2022, during the rollout of the National Broadband Network, average download speeds across Australia have increased from 9 Mbps to 53 Mbps. Based on the company's ongoing fixed line and fixed wireless network upgrades, and the anticipated uptake of higher speed tiers, Accenture has modelled that average wholesale download speeds across the **nbn**[®] network will more than double by 2030, rising to more than 130 Mbps², based on the **nbn** speed tiers currently in market.

Stephen Rue, Chief Executive Officer at NBN Co, said:

"Since Federation, Australia has faced an extreme paradox: our continent spans some 7.7 million square kilometres, yet more than 86 per cent of the population live in cities, mainly because that's where the work and economic opportunities are most concentrated.

"But the **nbn** is changing the way we live, work, educate and recreate. The **nbn** has proven to be the great equaliser and the great enabler. It is delivering a paradigm shift in how we work, access education and essential

services such as healthcare and mental health support. It also has the power to unlock the great conundrum of the Lucky Country: a massive land mass that is, for the most part, sparsely populated.

“With population growth our cities are becoming more congested. But thanks to the ubiquity of fast, reliable broadband, we are starting to see a gradual decentralisation of our population and workforce as people search for, and achieve, a better lifestyle in regional Australia.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Research commissioned by **nbn**. The analysis was specifically focused on broadband delivered to premises (both **nbn** and non-**nbn** broadband) and did not seek to measure or take into account the economic or social impact that may have come from mobile broadband. Although mobile networks account for only 13 per cent of downloads across retail **nbn**, non-**nbn** fixed and mobile networks in the June quarter of 2023 (ACCC Internet Activity Report for period ending 30 June 2023), the pattern of economic and social benefits set out in this report may change if mobile broadband was able to be explicitly included in the analysis.
2. **nbn** and non-**nbn** broadband
3. An end customer’s experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn**® network, depends on some factors outside **nbn**’s control (like equipment quality, software, and how a retail service provider designs its network) and the **nbn** technology used for the connection. Speeds may be impacted by network congestion on **nbn**’s Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods. Satellite users may experience latency.
4. Regardless of the retail service an end customer purchases, the actual wholesale speeds delivered by **nbn**’s highest wholesale speed tiers of 500 to close to 1000 Mbps will be less than 1Gbps due to equipment and network limitations and the peak information rate may fall anywhere in this range. In addition, the HFC Home Ultrafast bandwidth profile downstream service provided to retail providers is a ranged profile with a maximum sustained information rate of 750 Mbps. References to speeds are not end customer speeds; they are wholesale layer 2 peak information rate bandwidth provided to retail providers. NBN Co provides wholesale services to phone and internet providers. **nbn**® wholesale speed tiers available to providers vary depending on the access technology in an end users’ area.
5. These are **nbn** wholesale speed tiers, which **nbn** provides to retail phone and internet providers. Attainable wholesale speeds are subject to the rollout of network upgrades and some premises will require **nbn** to complete upgrades to the equipment at the premises.
6. Your experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn** network, depends on the **nbn** network technology and configuration over which services are delivered to your premises, whether you are using the internet during the busy period, and some factors outside our control (like your equipment quality, software, broadband plans, signal reception and how your service provider designs its network). Speeds may be impacted by the number of concurrent users on **nbn**’s Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods.

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Resources

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