



Media release

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NBN Co exploring connectivity solutions with low earth orbit satellite providers

NBN Co has released a closed request for information (RFI) to low earth orbit satellite (LEOs) providers to further understand their offerings.

The request for information is the first step in NBN Co looking ahead to how best to meet the evolving broadband needs of homes and businesses in the nbn satellite footprint.

The Company said the introduction of low earth orbit satellite technology over the last few years has been an exciting development. It is seeking to understand directly from the LEO operators what might be possible considering the scale of the nbn satellite footprint and user base and whether a number of unique nbn obligations can be met in order to supply services, including price certainty, network and data sovereignty and options for local support.

The Company has a strong history of embracing emerging technologies across the nbn network. It was among the first network operators in the world to announce plans to deploy extended range 5G mmWave into its fixed wireless network following extensive long range mmWave testing and was one of the first in the world to deploy Nokia's next generation MF series Optical Line Terminals, which supports higher capacity fibre optic broadband technologies and multi-gigabit speeds.

The Company also continues to invest heavily across regional Australia to evolve its network. This includes premises in regional Australia who are eligible to upgrade to full fibre* on demand, along with upgrading the fixed wireless network to deliver enhanced speeds and extended coverage, which will result in 120,000 satellite premises becoming eligible to access the nbn fixed wireless network and reducing the number of premises remaining in the nbn satellite footprint to around 300,000 by the end of 2024.

The Company also said its Sky Muster satellite service remains a critical part of the network and that it will continue to enhance the service, which is being made possible by the fixed wireless network expansion.

Jason Ashton, NBN Co Executive General Manager for Fixed Wireless and Satellite, said:

"We are always thinking about how best to meet the evolving broadband needs of the households and businesses across Australia, including those in our satellite footprint.

"It is important that we properly evaluate the potential of emerging technologies, including low earth orbit satellites, to improve our network and fulfil our mission to lift the digital capability of Australia.



“We believe that low earth orbit satellite technology could be a part of our network in the future, so we are engaging with those that may be able to offer this as a service in order to find out whether it is feasible.

“It is crucial for us to thoroughly examine all emerging technology options to ensure that we make the most informed decisions, considering factors such as technology advancements, commercial sustainability and customer experience.

“The nbn Sky Muster satellite network remains a critical part of our technology mix and we continue to invest and make enhancements to this service for the benefit of regional Australians.”

Last week the Company launched a new nbn[®] Sky Muster[®] Plus plan. nbn[®] Sky Muster[®] Plus Premium will provide uncapped data usage^{**} for all internet activities and for the first time our 25/5Mbps wholesale plan can offer burst download speeds of up to 100Mbps^{***, ****}. NBN Co has also flagged more innovation on the Sky Muster Plus service later in the year.

NBN Co expects that the assessment of information received under the RFI will take several months.

Disclaimers

**Conditions, eligibility criteria and costs will apply. Eligibility criteria is expected to include, among other things, being designated by nbn as a simple premises (eg. standalone premises or Single Dwelling Unit (SDU)) and once the program is available for an eligible premises, placing an order for an nbn powered plan based on an eligible wholesale speed tier. Additional costs may apply to providers, who may choose to pass this charge onto their customers. Not all providers offer plans based on the full range of wholesale speed tiers. Talk to your preferred provider for more information about availability and the right solution for your needs.*

*** Fair Use Policy and shaping apply.*

****Supplementary Burst allows for wholesale data transfer speeds to exceed the Access Rates of 25Mbps/5Mbps if network capacity is available. For Sky Muster Plus Premium the Supplementary Burst may be able to achieve, from time to time, bursts of up to 100Mbps download and 10Mbps upload. nbn does not guarantee that plans on Sky Muster Plus Premium will achieve burst wholesale download speeds of 100Mbps. Achievable burst speeds are subject to network capacity at the time of transfer (which varies over time based on aggregate usage of the network by all users and may also be dependent on the specifications of end user equipment.*

*****Customer experience, including the speeds achieved over the nbn network, depends on the nbn 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 of nbn’s control (like your equipment quality, software or signal reception). For nbn Satellite, end customers may also experience latency.*

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