

researchacma
Evidence
that informs

NBN consumer experience— residential research snapshot

MARCH 2018

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About the research

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) has conducted consumer research to gather information from residents and small and medium-sized businesses on their experience before, during and after migration to the National Broadband Network (NBN)¹.

The data collection phase is complete for two groups of NBN consumers (residential households and small to medium-sized businesses).

This snapshot provides some early insights into the experience of residential households before, during and after their migration to the NBN.

Between 13 November and 20 December 2017, 1,881 NBN residential households were interviewed. The data has been weighted to represent dwellings (referred to in this snapshot as 'households') connected in the last 12 months in the areas that were surveyed. Households migrated to the NBN using the technology types currently available—fibre to the premises (FTTP), fibre to the node/building (FTTN/B), hybrid fibre coaxial (HFC), fixed wireless and Sky Muster satellite—in the 12 months prior to data collection.

This research is not directly comparable with [previous research](#) conducted by the ACMA in 2016, which focused on the experience of residential and business FTTP connections. This is due to the need to change the design to best capture the current stage of the rollout and experiences of consumers. The 2016 research remains relevant as a marker for the experience of those with FTTP connections in the early stages of the rollout.

A full report, including findings from the residential and small and medium-sized business surveys, will be released in June 2018.

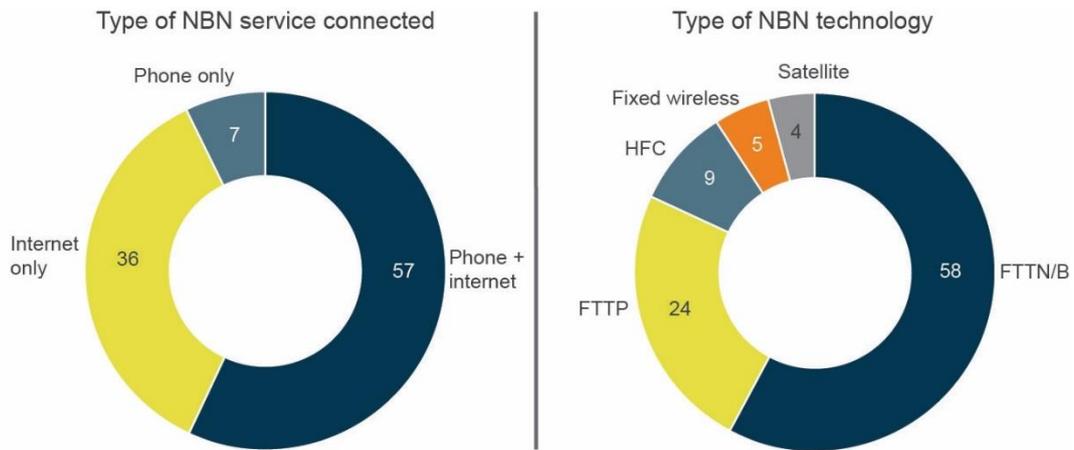
Household connections

Among households who connected to the NBN in the last 12 months, more than half (57 per cent) have both NBN telephone and internet services, 36 per cent have NBN internet only, and seven per cent have only phone services connected to the NBN.

These households are connected across the NBN technology types currently available (Figure 1).

¹ Throughout this snapshot, the ACMA distinguishes between the National Broadband Network (NBN)—the wholesale broadband network being built across Australia—and NBN Co—the company responsible for its rollout. The survey instrument used the term 'NBN' and data reporting reflects this.

Figure 1: Services and technology type connected to households (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months (n=1,881).

A8. Which of the following services has your household moved to the NBN in the last 12 months?

A12. And which type of NBN connection does your household have?

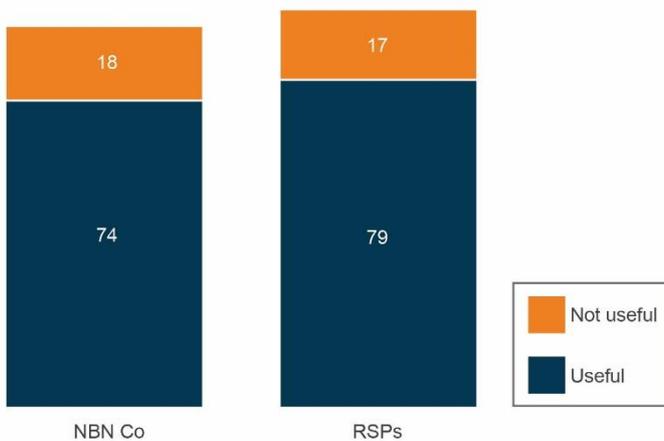
Before connecting to the NBN

Information given to households before connecting

Households were asked if they recalled receiving information from NBN Co or retail service providers (RSPs) about how to connect to the NBN. Half (50 per cent) of all households recalled receiving information from NBN Co about connecting to the NBN, while two-thirds (67 per cent) of households recalled receiving information from RSPs.

Figure 2 shows similar proportions of households considered the information received from both NBN Co (74 per cent) and RSPs (79 per cent) to be useful.

Figure 2: Usefulness of information received before connecting to the NBN (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months and recalled receiving information from NBN Co (n=973) or their RSP (n=1,298).

Note: The following rating scale was used for B5 and B8—‘very useful’, ‘somewhat useful’, ‘not very useful’, ‘not at all useful’, ‘don’t know/can’t say’.

Note: In the chart, ‘useful’ is calculated by combining ‘very useful’ and ‘somewhat useful’, and ‘not useful’ is calculated by combining ‘not very useful’ and ‘not at all useful’.

B5: And overall, how useful or not useful was this information from NBN Co in informing your household about how to connect to the NBN?

B8: Overall, how useful or not useful was this information from service providers in informing your household about how to connect to the NBN?

For those households connected via FTTP, FTTN/B and HFC, 69 per cent knew there was a specific time frame to move services to the NBN (usually 18 months) once it became available in their area, and that their previous services would be disconnected.

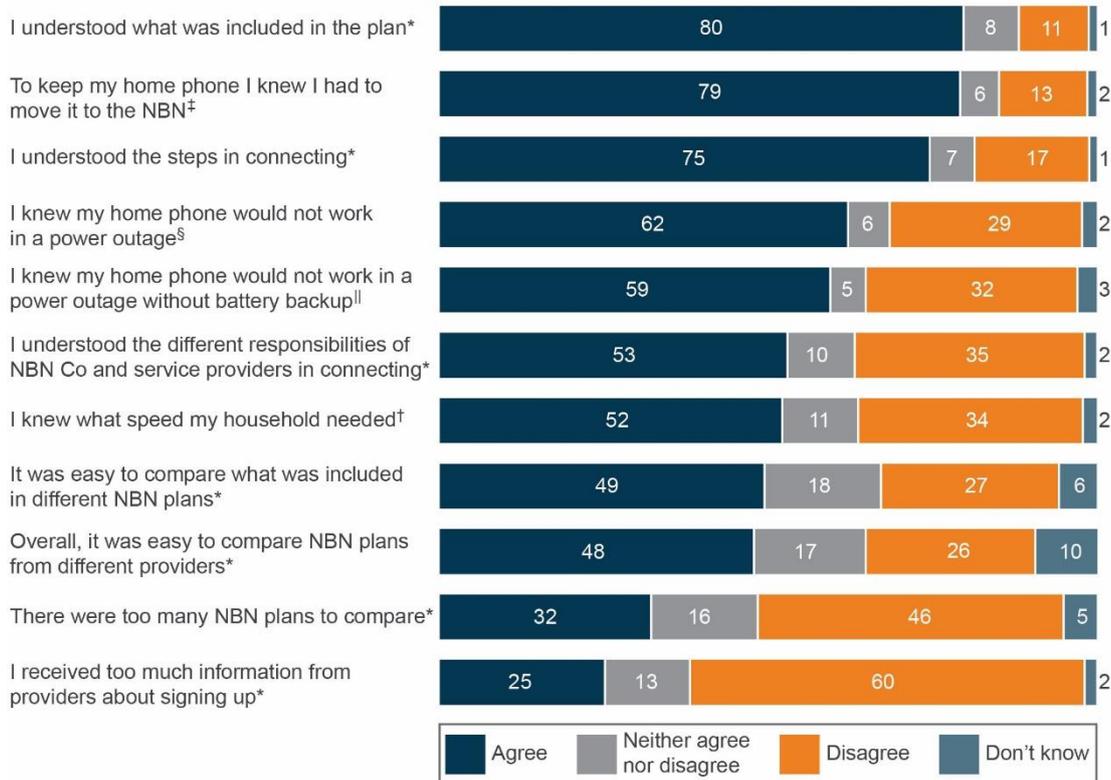
Three per cent of all households reported having an alarm monitoring system and two per cent had a medical alarm connected to the NBN. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of households with those devices were aware they should contact their provider to check compatibility before connecting to the NBN. Nearly half (48 per cent) of households with a medical alarm connected to the NBN were aware they could register their device with NBN to avoid disruption to their service.²

² Caution: small sample size (n=31), indicative data only.

Understanding of the connection process

Households were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about the NBN (Figure 3). Statements were asked of all households unless otherwise noted.

Figure 3: Household attitudes before connection (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months (*n=1,881), an NBN home phone connection excluding wireless and satellite (‡n=1,266), have an NBN home phone connection (excluding FTTP home) (§n=1,082) have an NBN home phone connection (FTTP homes only) (||n=322), have a NBN internet connection (†n=1,757).

B22a. I'm going to read out some statements about the NBN. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each one.

B22b. Now I'm going to read out two statements about NBN information. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following.

Note: The following rating scale was used for B22a and B22b—'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', 'don't know/can't say'.

Note: In the chart, the figure for 'agree' is calculated by adding 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. The figure for disagree is calculated by adding 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

Key factors in selecting providers and plans

Households were asked to rate as important or not important a number of factors that they may have considered when choosing an NBN provider and plan. The top five factors presented were important for at least three-quarters of households. Those who selected multiple factors were then asked to select a single most important factor in their decision-making, with cost the most important factor for the largest group of households (29 per cent) (Table 1).

Table 1: Factors considered when choosing a plan and provider

Factor	Important (%)	Most important (%)
Cost	86	29
Keeping my phone number [‡]	82	14
Confidence in faults being fixed*	80	8
Speed of internet connection [†]	79	21
Amount of data included in the plan [†]	78	9
Keeping my email address [†]	68	5
Staying with existing service provider for continuity*	59	10
Getting a free modem [†]	54	<0.5
Positive customer reviews*	50	1
Not being locked into a contract*	48	2

*Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months (*n=1,881); with NBN internet (†n=1,757), with NBN home phone (‡n=1,412).*

Note 1: Households could select multiple factors.

Note 2: 'Don't know' and 'not applicable' are not shown, and are five per cent or less for each statement.

Note 3: 'Most important' was asked of households who had selected multiple factors, and were asked to select one factor.

B19. I'm going to read some factors that you might have considered when choosing your NBN service/s plan and provider. For each one could you tell me if it was important or not important to you?

B19b. Which of those was the most important for you in choosing your plan or provider?

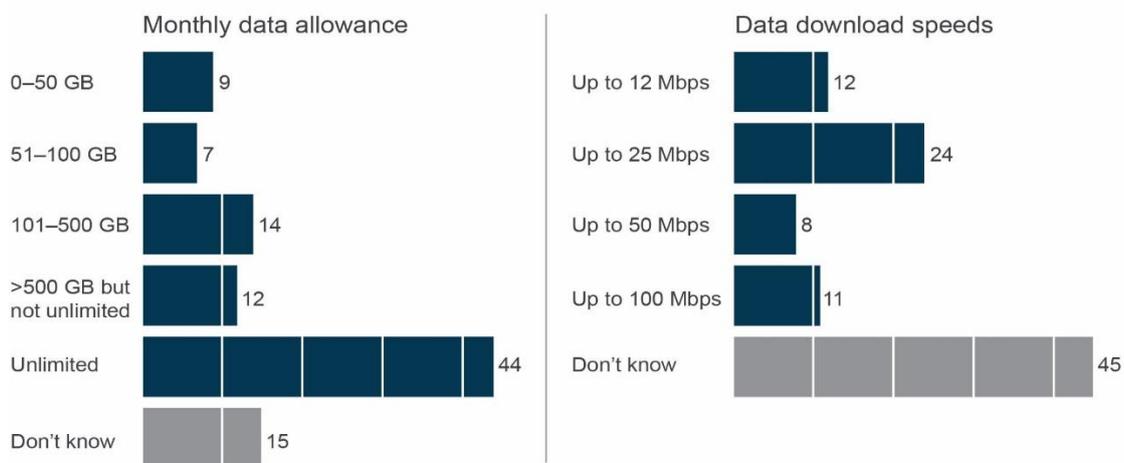
Download speeds, data allowances and plan costs

Eighty-five per cent of households could recall the monthly data allowance in their NBN internet plan, while 15 per cent did not know.

Three-quarters (76 per cent) of internet households were aware of the availability of different download speed options. When asked about their own household's data download speed, 55 per cent could recall the speed included in their own plan while 45 per cent could not (Figure 4).

Forty-two per cent of internet households reported they have completed speed tests to check download speeds for their internet service.

Figure 4: Monthly data allowance and data download speeds (%)



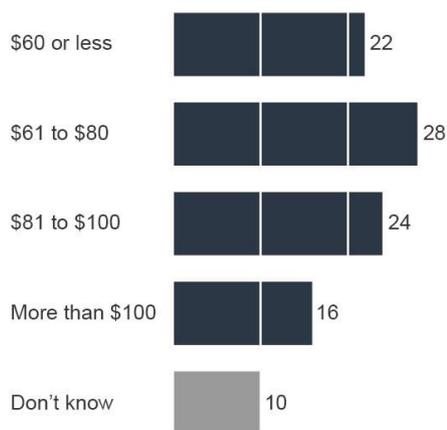
Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months and have NBN internet (n=1,757).

B17. What is the monthly data allowance included in your NBN internet plan?

B18b. What is the data download speed included in your NBN internet plan?

Households reported a range of monthly plan costs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Cost of monthly household plans (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months (n=1,881).

B16. What is the usual cost of your NBN plan per month?

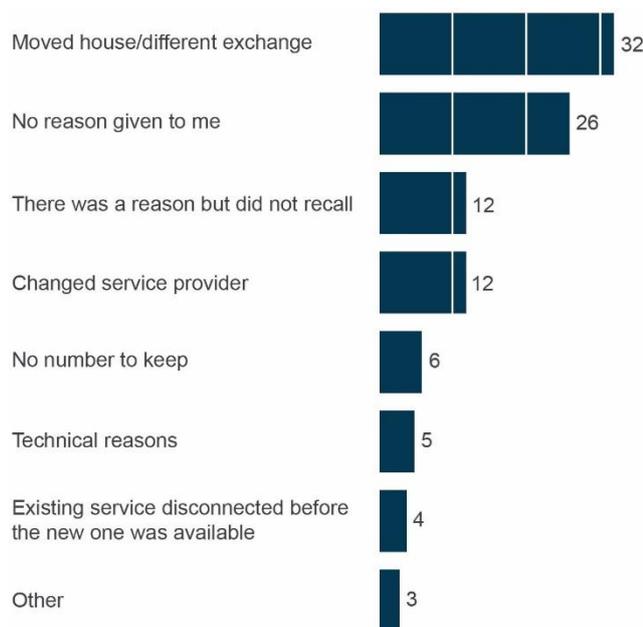
The connection process

Changing providers and keeping phone numbers when moving to the NBN

For those households with a home phone, 86 per cent stayed with the same provider when they moved their phone service to the NBN. Among the same group, 69 per cent reported that their service provider told them whether they could keep their phone number. Of all households with a phone on the NBN, 91 per cent were able to keep their home phone number, while three per cent did not know.

Of the six per cent of NBN home phone users who did not keep their home phone number, 45 per cent had expected to. The most common reason for not being able to keep the same number was moving house/different exchange, which was reported by a third (32 per cent) of this group (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Reasons given to households for not keeping their home phone number (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months, have NBN home phone and were not able to keep their home phone number (n=77). Caution: small sample size, indicative data only.

C5b. Did you expect that you could keep your phone number when connecting your services to the NBN?

C6. What reasons did they give you for not being able to keep your number?

Method of service installation

Among all households, 45 per cent self-installed their service (using a kit from their service provider) and 53 per cent had a professional install (a technician visiting their home).

For those undertaking a self-install, 83 per cent found the process 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy'. Among those who completed a self-install, 29 per cent required assistance from their service provider.

Service interruptions when connecting to the NBN

Thirty-four per cent of households reported being left without phone and/or internet services during the connection process.

Among those with an internet service, 30 per cent were without internet for a period of time during the connection process. For those with a home phone service, 32 per cent were without a home phone for a period during the connection process.

The most frequent reason for lack of service during connection was 'technical issue with installation', reported by 65 per cent of those left without a home phone and 63 per cent of those left without internet.

For those left without phone or internet services once disconnected from their old service, the period of disconnection reported is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Period of disconnection reported by households left without a home phone or internet service.

	Without home phone* (%)	Without internet† (%)
Up to 24 hours	20	17
1–3 days	26	22
4–7 days	13	13
1–2 weeks	14	19
2–4 weeks	13	15
More than a month	12	13

*Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months and who were left without a home phone service (*n=472) or without internet service (†n=539) after disconnecting from their old service.*

C2. And how long were you left without any kind of home phone service once disconnected from you old service?

C3. And how long were you left without any kind of internet service at home once disconnected from your old service?

Contacting service providers or NBN Co during the connection process

All households were asked whether they contacted their service provider for any reason about the process of connecting to the NBN—42 per cent contacted their service provider and 12 per cent contacted NBN Co. In most instances (88 per cent), the contact to NBN Co was for the same reason as contacting the service provider.

Table 3 shows the reasons households contacted their service provider or NBN Co.

Table 3: Main reasons households contacted their service provider or NBN Co

	Contacted RSP* (%)	Contacted NBN Co† (%)
Setting up home phone and/or internet services	32	21
Fault or technical issue with home phone and/or internet services	25	23
Installation of National Broadband Network equipment inside or outside	21	19
Activating your service for the first time	15	8
Delays in connection of National Broadband Network service	13	28
Fault or technical issue with National Broadband Network equipment	10	18
Slow internet speeds/internet speeds ³	9	4
Technician didn't turn up	7	7
Gathering information on services such as prices and inclusions	6	4
General enquiry about your account, other than billing	6	2
Billing enquiry/billing issue	5	<0.5
Make, cancel or reschedule appointments	5	2

Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months and contacted their service provider (*n=759) or NBN co (†n=250) about the connection process.

Note 1: Responses below 5 per cent are not shown.

C7. After you ordered your NBN plan, did you contact your service provider about the actual process of connecting to the NBN for any reason? We mean from you ordering your service to having a working connection.

C8. And what were the reasons (for you contacting your provider about the process of connecting to the NBN)?

C9. Did you contact NBN Co during the process of connecting to the NBN for any reason?

C10a. What was the reason for contacting NBN Co?

³ Reasons for contacting RSP is 'slow internet speeds'; reason for contacting NBN is 'internet speeds'.

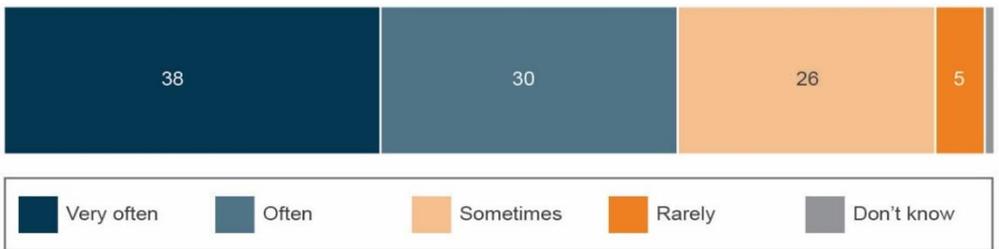
Using the NBN

Experiencing faults and issues since connecting to the NBN

All households were asked whether they had experienced an issue or fault *since* connecting to the NBN. Among all households, 27 per cent reported no issue or fault, while 49 per cent reported dropouts and 28 per cent service outages.

Among all internet users, 33 per cent reported slow data speeds in general and 36 per cent reported slow data speeds in the evening with varying frequency (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Frequency of slow data speeds in the evening reported by households (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months and reported experiencing slower data speeds in the evening (n=658).

B18F. And how often do you notice slower speeds in the evening?

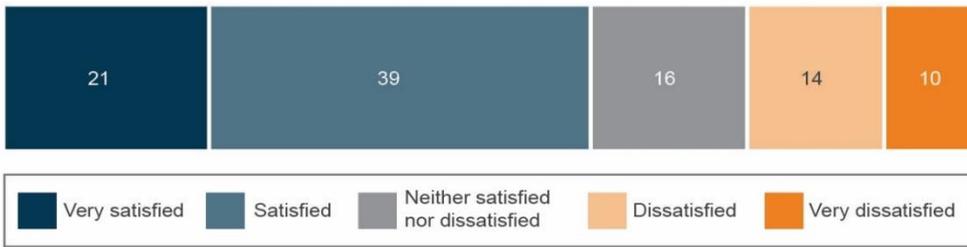
Complaints about issues and faults since connecting to the NBN

Among households who connected to the NBN in the last 12 months, 31 per cent made a complaint to their current or previous NBN service provider.

Among all households who made a complaint, 20 per cent of complaints were resolved on the same day. Fifteen per cent took longer than a week to resolve and a further 49 per cent remained unresolved at the time of the survey.

For those whose complaint was resolved, households were asked to rate their satisfaction with the complaints-handling process (Figure 8). Of those who were dissatisfied, the most reported reason was 'took too long to fix/take action' (58 per cent), followed by 'poor communication or lack of communication' (48 per cent) (Figure 9).

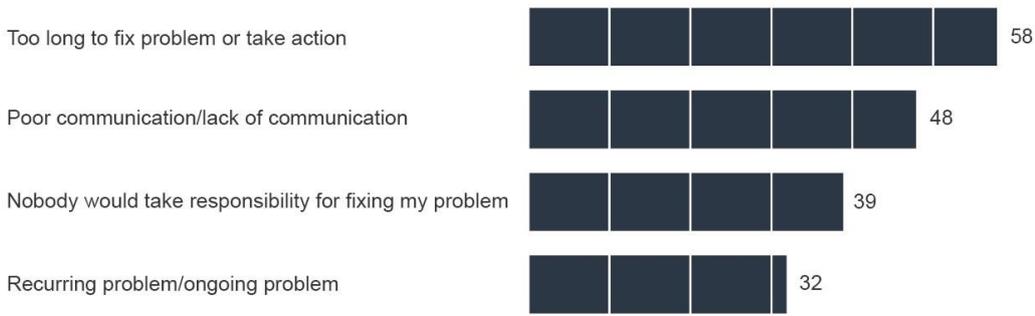
Figure 8: Satisfaction with complaints-handling process among households who had made a complaint and had it resolved (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months with a resolved complaint at the time of the research (n=345).

D18. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how the complaint was handled?

Figure 9: Main reasons for dissatisfaction with complaints-handling (%)



Base: Residential households connected to the NBN in the last 12 months, had a resolved complaint and were dissatisfied with the complaints-handling process (n=98).

D19. For what reasons are you dissatisfied with how the complaint was handled?

Methodology

Interpreting the results in this report

The data presented is based on weighted survey data that represents all households in the areas surveyed that connected to the NBN in the previous 12 months. The data is therefore subject to statistical variance, depending on the sample size of those asked particular questions.

Percentages are reported rounded to whole numbers and may not add to exactly 100 per cent due to factors such as rounding, multiple responses or 'don't know' responses not shown.

Sample sizes should be noted for each table and figure. In some instances where sample sizes are small, the data provided is indicative only.

Sample design and weighting

The sample design included households within geographic areas who had greater than 10 per cent of premises activated to the NBN in the previous 30 months; with a higher proportion of those activated in the most recent 18 months. Those living in areas with only a very small proportion of NBN activations were excluded due to the difficulty and cost involved in trying to sample them. Households were then screened to include only those that had connected to the NBN in the previous 12 months.

A multi-stage weighting process was conducted to ensure each household's chance of selection (including household phone type—landline-only, mobile phone-only, both) as well as response profiles were accounted for, and data was weighted to the latest ABS population data (location defined according to ABS SA3s).

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