



# 2024 Communications Portfolio

## November Report

Sally Brindal

### Telstra Message from Nicole Ward, Senior Regional Corporate Relations Manager

We thank ICPA for continuing to raise concerns on behalf of members with Telstra. We carefully investigate concerns raised and search for solutions or alternatives to improve connectivity for all our customers.

One of the key concerns raised recently is in relation to planned outages in our mobile network and the impact on education for remote and geographically isolated students. We understand the critical role telecommunication services play for the families you represent, especially those relying on connectivity for distance education.

At Telstra, we periodically upgrade our mobile network to enhance service quality. When planning these upgrades or temporary outages, we consider several factors, including:

- Forecasting high network usage periods (e.g., school holidays, peak seasonal work, or holiday demands in specific locations)
- The duration of the outage and local management strategies
- Coverage from neighbouring sites
- Potential impacts on critical services (e.g., health-related businesses)

For extended outages, we may deploy temporary network solutions to minimize disruptions. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis, considering the factors mentioned above and community consultation. However, deploying temporary solutions for outages longer than 24 hours is challenging due to limited availability and prioritization, especially during natural disasters or other extreme events.

We strive to communicate [planned outages](#) effectively. Our systems send text messages to devices connected to the affected base station, and outage information is available on [Telstra.com/outages](https://www.telstra.com.au/outages). We aim to provide seven days' notice, though sometimes shorter notice is necessary for safety reasons. For significant outages, we also use media releases to inform communities and stakeholders.

While our mobile network is vital for regional and remote Australians, we recommend that remote students primarily use fixed internet connections, such as those provided by nbn or Starlink. This reduces reliance on the mobile network during planned outages and alleviates data load pressures.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to improve our network and support connectivity for all Australians.

ICPA continues to work closely with Telstra, raising concerns on behalf of members about connectivity challenges impacting remote and geographically isolated families, particularly those relying on telecommunications for distance education. We remain committed to advocating for better connectivity solutions for all members and appreciate your continued support.