COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Lauren Lewis – Portfolio Leader, March 2026

TELSTRA

Retirement of ADSL & CAN Radio Services to enable new connectivity by 16th November 2027

ADSL is an older broadband technology that delivers internet services over the copper telephone network, originally designed for voice calls rather than modern data use. As it is a data service, USO does not apply.

CAN Radio is a legacy fixed wireless voice service that uses radio technology to connect customers in remote and regional areas where traditional cabling isn't viable. It has played a critical role in keeping communities connected for decades, particularly in locations with limited infrastructure.

In terms of replacement, CAN Radio voice services will transition to stronger and more reliable options such as NBN, 4G and 5G Fixed Wireless or satellite-based services, depending on what's available and most suitable at each location.

- Positives: Stronger Reliability/Improved & Stable Connection Speeds/Maintenance Advantages/Remote Access possible;
- Concerns: Power Access/Costs to Customer/Voice Service Costs/Infrastructure Requirements/Timeline of reaching out to Customers/Availability of Additional Power Supplies/Number of Customers Affected/Device Upgrade Requirements;
- Customer consultation for those being affected to understand all circumstances and assist with additional relevant support;
- Aim of smoother transitions, aware Next G Closure experience was not well received, this feedback has been taken on board and will be implemented into this new exit strategy through a proof of concept;
- Improved Communications to customers – simple, clear and relevant messages to customers, less overload of unnecessary and confusing information; dedicated case managers to aid in one point of contact.
- High stakeholder engagement
- Ensuring access to voices services remains vital;
- 400 Remote Payphone Upgrades to enable Wi-Fi hotspot access;
- Will not affect connections when contacting Triple Zero (000)

Pictured above is an example of the current CAN Radio infrastructure, including its dedicated solar array, which is the focus of the disconnection and retirement rollout. CAN Radio, or Customer Access Network (Radio), is a fixed wireless voice service used in locations where copper cabling is not feasible.

This is distinct from the traditional copper phone line—whether underground or above ground—that runs directly into a home to provide a fixed-line phone service. That copper infrastructure is not the subject of this retirement program.

Additional Definitions:

CAN Radio stands for Customer Access Network Radio. There are a few technical 'point to point' and 'point to multipoint' technology types within CAN Radio, including:

SCARS/DCARS/MCARS — single, dual and multichannel radio systems, which connect one or more phone services directly to a nearby radio site.
HCRC — High Capacity Radio Concentrator systems, which connect many customers through a central radio hub.
ADSL stands for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line.

Telstra Regional Workshop Recap – Held 10 April 2025 – Jane Cunningham Attended

Customer Support Improvements:

Provide the list of locations for the Tech2 Store and the case management flow diagram.
Reopen and investigate closed customer issues where issues were not resolved.
Improve communication about web forms and other support channels to customers.
Network enhancements:

Consider the re-issue of high-resolution 3G coverage maps.
Address ways to identify location issues on coverage map and improve accuracy, including adding Google GPS mapping.
Explore the use of alternative energy sources like wind power and improve power resilience.
Power resiliency

Improve communication and support during emergencies, including having a single map of site outages (similar to how power companies present outages)
Where required, work with relevant stakeholders to support advocacy to Governments on power resiliency measures / changes.
Consider a community engagement model that provides training for community members to support connecting power to sites in a power outage.
Transitioning to new technologies

Standardise the terminology (don't confuse the customer with multiple terms) and make sure we highlight the limitations that exist for Satellite to Mobile technology
Consider how we can collaborate on lessons learned and how to better support technology transitions in the future through engaging with stakeholder groups / customers.Price Rises

Price Increases
From 1 July 2025 Price Increases advised to most postpaid mobile, mobile broadband and home and small business internet plans.

How to prepare and stay connected during a natural disaster

As wild weather looms, we're preparing for another season of potential bushfires, floods and cyclones. You should be too: here are our best tips for getting ready.

It's important to remember that during a natural disaster, our network and other infrastructure like electricity can be affected which may interrupt your service.

To read more on how to be prepared, scan the QR code.

Mobile phones and portable equipment

Invest in an alternative charger.

If you don't already have one, purchase a phone charger that isn't dependent on a power outlet. A popular choice is a 'power bank' battery pack that can be charged from a power outlet prior to an event and used if grid electricity is unavailable, or a portable solar panel charger or in-car charger.

Back up your data.

Store your important data, like contact information and personal photos, in the cloud using an online service. If you have an Apple or Google device, these smartphones have automatic backups that you can enable to make sure your photos are always saved. You may also consider saving your essential documents down as having electronic copies can save you time, worry and stress – check out ePrepared – a free online self-help tool we have launched with Justice Connect.

Know your emergency numbers.

Store a list of essential contact numbers for your local Police, Fire, SES teams as well as friends and family on your phone and as a non-electronic, ideally waterproofed, backup. Make sure you include our dedicated disaster assistance number – **1800 888 888.**

When you have your list of essential numbers, make sure you make a printed copy to keep in your wallet, purse or bag, and keep a version in your car as well. Power can go out for a week or longer during a disaster. Keeping a printed copy means that if your phone is out of battery and you need an important phone number, you have it handy at all times.

Consider satellite messaging for remote areas

Telstra Satellite Messaging is Australia's first satellite-to-mobile text service, allowing eligible Telstra customers to send and receive text messages when our mobile network is unavailable – ideal for regional and remote areas. Using Starlink's Direct to Cell capabilities, compatible devices automatically connect when outdoors with a direct line of sight to the sky.

Telstra Satellite Messaging is not designed to be an emergency service, especially as you cannot text Triple Zero directly. It will mostly benefit people who live or travel outside mobile networks in regional and remote parts of the country, for example to let loved ones know you're okay, or for road trippers experiencing a flat tyre and needing to reach out for help.

Explore a repeater device.

Like any mobile network, coverage on the Telstra mobile network depends on where you are, the mobile handset, tablet or mobile broadband device you're using, and whether an external antenna can be attached. It's important to understand that different devices have different capabilities.

Legal network coverage extension devices amplify the network signal your mobile device receives, which extends the area that your device can work in. These devices can help you connect to the Telstra mobile network from further away than normally possible, or in areas where signal may struggle to penetrate – such as indoors, or in hilly or dense terrain.

It's important to note that boosters are illegal to own or operate on any network in Australia, and they can disrupt or even prevent others from making calls to emergency 000.

Legal wireless network coverage extension devices, such as the Telstra Mobile Smart Antenna and Telstra Go, are also known as 'repeaters' as they repeat the signal from one location to another.

You can also take a look at our range of repeaters and extenders to see if one suits your needs.

Fixed line phones and nbn®

Home phones on the nbn® are different.

Since the nbn® carries your home phone line, it will be unavailable during a power outage. It's best to have a mobile phone handy for this instance, especially in remote areas.

Enable Wi-Fi calling so you can call for help.

If the cellular network signal is down during a disaster, you can still use your mobile phone to make and receive calls and text messages, provided it supports Wi-Fi Calling. Wi-Fi Calling provides basic voice-calling capability on compatible devices when you're connected to a supported Wi-Fi network and can't connect to the Telstra Mobile Network.

We've also switched on SMS over Wi-Fi, allowing you to receive texts via your fixed line connection when you're in Wi-Fi coverage. Here's our FAQ on how to set it up in case you haven't already.

Keep a corded phone.

A cordless fixed line phone is convenient, but remember, most cordless phones rely on electric power to operate, so you may lose the use of your landline during a power outage. A corded phone draws its electricity directly from the phone line (excluding fixed line phones on nbn®) and can be used during a power outage.

Keeping in touch in a disaster

Set up a virtual meeting place.

If you have internet access, an instant messaging group chat with friends and family, or a social media site like Facebook or even Instagram, can give you and your loved ones extra information during a time of crisis.

Find your local payphone.

If mobile services have been impacted, find your local payphone. We have recently upgraded over 1,000 of them with free Wi-Fi and extended battery back-up so they are more likely to withstand disaster impacts and can be a huge help if you need to make a call or get online.

Know your evacuation locations.

Know where your local evacuation centre and emergency meeting spots are and what different routes you can use to get there as some roads may not be accessible during the disaster.

Download emergency services apps.

Official apps will give you the most up-to-date information on what's happening in your area, including natural disaster warnings.

Be alert to changing conditions.

Subscribe to services that will alert you to weather changes, road closures and updates from other service providers in your area.

Use local information sources.

Online, social media accounts for your local authorities and emergency services will share crucial information. Your local broadcaster will also share information over the radio – make sure you have a battery-powered radio or car radio to listen in on.

Helpful tip: Make sure your personal details are up-to-date in the MyTelstra app. That way we can let you know about any disaster support you are eligible for as quickly as possible. Tap the person icon (top right) and select 'personal details' to check or edit your info.

NBN

In August 2025, NBN and Amazon announced an agreement to deliver high-speed, wholesale fixed broadband using Amazon's Project Kuiper—now rebranded as **Amazon Leo**—to introduce Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite broadband for eligible customers in parts of regional, rural and remote Australia. The service is planned to be available from mid-2026 to both eligible existing and new customers within NBN's current satellite footprint.

NBN is currently progressing a consultation process with Retail Service Providers and industry stakeholders through its Product Development Forum. This consultation period is open from 18 February to 1 April 2026 and will inform final decisions on speed tiers, wholesale pricing, and equipment terms and conditions. ICPA WA recently participated in this consultation, with its feedback and comments well received.

The agreement will enable NBN Co to progressively transition from its existing geostationary Sky Muster satellite service over the coming years, while complementing ongoing investments in fibre and fixed wireless upgrades across regional Australia. To ensure continuity of service, NBN Co will continue to maintain and operate its two Sky Muster satellites until customers are transitioned to the new wholesale LEO satellite offering powered by Amazon Leo.

The Sky Muster satellites are expected to remain viable and operational until approximately 2032. NBN Co is therefore exploring future options for these assets once all existing customers have been migrated to the new LEO satellite service.

Ellie Sweeney, Chief Executive Officer of NBN Co, said that "LEO satellite broadband, supplied by NBN Co and powered by Amazon's Project Kuiper, will represent a major leap forward for customers in regional, rural and remote Australia. Australians deserve access to fast, effective broadband regardless of whether they live in a major city, on the outskirts of a country town, or far from their nearest neighbour. That's what NBN was established to deliver. By upgrading to next-generation LEO satellite broadband powered by Project Kuiper, we are bringing the best available technology to Australians in the bush."

NBN Co has invited existing Sky Muster and Sky Muster Plus customers, as well as potential new customers, to register their interest and receive updates via **nbnco.com.au/register**.

- **School Student Broadband Initiative**

The School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) is now closed to new families and carers and will not be accepting further nominations. It was designed for 30,000 families and carers. That allocation has now been filled and all unused vouchers expired on 30 June 2025.

All existing School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) connections will remain in service until 30 June 2028. Existing SSBI families and carers are advised to contact their chosen participating internet service provider for assistance and support.

- **NAPLAN**

NBN are supporting the online delivery of NAPLAN tests in collaboration with ACARA. A change embargo on planned upgrades and maintenance will apply during the testing period from 11 to 26 March 2026, with restrictions in place on weekdays between 6.00 am and 9.00 pm local time. Critical works will be scheduled outside school hours where possible, and customers will be notified of any planned outages through their service providers.

ACCAN

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

- **TELSTRA**

ADSL & CAN Radio: As the transition unfolds, several practical issues require attention: continuity during outages, backup power at premises, affordability of alternative services, and hands-on assistance so households and small businesses can migrate to suitable devices and plans without losing essential connectivity.

Telstra has argued that newer options-such as LEO-satellite-based services-offer higher availability than legacy platforms; wherever such claims are made, performance should be transparently assessed against real-world conditions, including extreme weather.

ACCAN will track impacts closely to ensure regional, rural and remote users are not left worse off as networks evolve and that community safety-particularly access to 000-remains front and centre.

- **UOMO**

Australians will be better connected than ever with new laws establishing the framework for the Albanese Government's Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO) after this legislation was passed in parliament on the 29 October 2025.

The legislation, will require national mobile carriers Telstra, Optus and TPG to provide access to SMS and voice coverage for Australians nationwide, almost everywhere you can see the sky.

It is expected the changes will help add up to 5 million square km of basic outdoor mobile SMS and voice coverage across Australia, making Australians more connected, keeping them safer, and ensuring they are able to call for help in times of emergency.

It will be made possible by a combination of existing terrestrial towers and new Low Earth Orbit Satellite technology, which allows for mobile signals to connect Direct to Device rather than relying on land-based infrastructure like mobile towers.

The UOMO will start by 1 December 2027 subject to market developments, with the Government working closely with industry to monitor the rollout of new Direct to Device technology.

- **NBN**

In 2025, ACCAN conducted a national community engagement program with consumers, small businesses and sector stakeholders. The program informed ACCAN's submission to the ACCC's consultation on NBN Co's Replacement Module Application (RMA).

Following this engagement program, a report - **Future of Australia's NBN** - was released on 10 March 2026. The report presents the feedback gathered through these discussions, outlines participants' experiences with the NBN, their communication needs, and their views on NBN Co's proposed expenditure and work programs. The findings aim to help ensure broadband services better meet the needs of consumers, small businesses and households across Australia.

The report represents the culmination of years of advocacy and engagement in regulatory consultations on the future of the NBN and will help shape policy discussions for years to come.

REGIONAL TECH HUB

The Regional Tech Hub is funded by the Australian Government's Better Connectivity Plan and is run by the National Farmers' Federation. If you live or work in rural, regional and remote Australia, they are there to help you with your phone or internet. There are some really fantastic resources available.

What's new on the Hub

Fresh content and tools to help your networks stay connected:

- *Emergency preparedness webpage: Internet and voice services aid in staying connected in emergencies or natural disasters - before, during and after.*

  https://regionaltechhub.org.au/staying-connected-in-emergencies/

- *Breaking Down Farm Connectivity booklet: A newly launched booklet designed to help explain the different layers of connectivity across a farming operation. In addition, the booklet is packed with useful tips and tools to assist with your digital farming journey.*

  https://regionaltechhub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Breaking-Down-Farm-Connectivity-A4-Portrait-Saddle-Stitched-Final-210-x-297-mm-9.09.25.pdf

- *Satellite to Mobile Quick Facts guide: This one pager helps explain what Satellite to Mobile is, Telstra's Starlink announcement and things to be aware of.*

  https://regionaltechhub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/STM-Quick-Facts-Help-Guide-JB-Final-30.09.25.pdf

- *When the Signal Drops: How Remote Satellite Connectivity is Saving Lives blog: Read our new blog which explores new satellite connectivity technologies useful in emergencies.*

  https://regionaltechhub.org.au/staying-connected-in-emergencies/