

**CommsDay Summit 2026**  
**CEO keynote by Ellie Sweeney**

Sydney, 3 June 2026

Good morning everyone.

It's great to be back at the CommsDay Summit, here on Gadigal land.

I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

To Grahame and the CommsDay team. Thank you for bringing us together again, and for the role you play in shaping the conversation across our industry.

These moments matter. They give us a chance to step back, take stock, and look ahead together.

And it is fair to say, it has been a challenging 12 months.

Not just for those of us in telecommunications, but for many communities and many industries across the country.

When Australians face disruption - whether from pressure on household budgets, the pace of technological change, or severe weather - expectations of essential services rise.

Connectivity is not, and never has been, a "nice to have". It is clearly critical to how our communities and our country functions.

I say that with humility, because none of us delivers this alone.

The standard Australians expect - consistent, reliable connectivity - is the product of an ecosystem: network operators, retailers, government, vendors, field partners, regulators, and the thousands of people who keep services running day and night.

At nbn, everything we do is grounded in our purpose: to elevate Australia by connecting people and powering progress.

It frames *why* we exist: to serve the nation - to steward a long-term national investment, and to keep building infrastructure that Australians can rely on for decades to come.

So today I want to focus on three things.

- **First**, how we're delivering for Australians with an unrelenting focus on a consistent and reliable experience.
- **Second**, why fibre sits at the centre of changing demand - and the foundation for what comes next.
- **And third**, how we make sure the benefits of this national investment are realised by people across Australia - not as a slogan, but in real outcomes in homes, businesses and communities.

### Delivering for Australians: more consistency and reliability

Let me start with delivery - because it's where expectations are felt most clearly.

Over the past year, we've continued sustained investment across the nbn network - across fibre, HFC, Fixed Wireless and satellite.

And the reason is simple: capability is only meaningful if it shows up as consistency and reliability.

Australians don't experience "the network" in theory - they experience it in the moments that matter.

When work has to happen, when a business is processing payments, when students are learning online, when families are accessing services, and when communities are responding to disruption.

This is also why partnership matters so much.

Through Accelerate Great, we, as an industry, delivered one of the most significant internet upgrades in Australia's history.

And it worked because it was coordinated, and executed at scale - across networks, IT stacks, operational processes and customer support.

And we can see the results clearly.

- Today, 43% of services are on plans of 100 megabits per second or above - representing around 3.8 million homes and businesses, including nearly 400,000 gigabit customers.
- And 34% of nbn services are on plans of 500 megabits per second, up from 3% a year ago.

That is a material shift - and it tells us something important: when the performance is there, and the value is clear, Australians step into higher capability.

If we look beneath those headline numbers, fibre is at the heart of this momentum.

- We now have 3.2 million active Fibre to the Premises services, around 37% of active connections - which means fibre has overtaken legacy copper as the dominant fixed line technology.
- And the pace of change is real: around 47,000 customers are upgrading each month, and this year alone we expect to complete more than 560,000 fibre upgrades, ahead of plan.

When customers move from copper to fibre, the change goes beyond speed. We see it in how they use the network, with data usage increasing by around 19 per cent over the past year.

And as demand rises, the measure that increasingly matters is not peak speed on a good day - it is whether performance is consistent during the busiest hours, and whether services stay available when conditions are difficult.

On that front, the evidence is strong.

Over the past year, FTTP delivered 99.98% availability.

And as the network becomes more reliable, we are seeing that reflected in customer outcomes: nbn's TIO complaints have reduced over time from 3,208 in March 2020 to 998 in March 2026 - a reduction of around 69%.

Reliability is also about the way we operate.

We're embedding intelligence across network operations - combining real-time telemetry, predictive analytics and automation - continuing the shift from reactive fault handling to proactive issue prevention and faster restoration.

And there's a second discipline that sits behind consistency: running the network well.

Even as we continue to invest, we've improved efficiency and reduced avoidable activity:

- Service incidents are down 6%, and truck rolls are down 7%;
- And since the commencement of the fibre upgrade program in 2022, we have reduced truck roll volumes by 47%, including a 36% reduction in service assurance activity.

Now, I want to acknowledge that we don't always get it right.

But our commitment is that when we fall short, it is our responsibility to listen, to learn, and to keep improving.

This is what a "service to the nation" mindset looks like in practice: investing for the long term, lifting outcomes for customers, and improving performance and efficiency at the same time.

### **Why fibre is at the centre of changing demand - and what comes next**

My second point is fibre, and I want to be very clear about why it matters.

I think we can agree that Fibre is the gold standard of connectivity.

Fibre is critical national infrastructure.

And it is the foundation of a next-generation network because it delivers what the future requires: greater reliability, more capacity, and the ability to scale.

Today, more than 5 million premises are ready to order full fibre services.

- And the transition has reached a clear inflection point: two years ago, just over 2 million premises were served by fibre; today it is 3.2 million.

But this isn't just about the footprint that is already upgraded.

- A major focus now is providing an upgrade path to fibre for the last remaining 622,000 customers on the FTTN technology - across regional and metro footprints.

Right across cities and regional towns, nbn and its delivery partners have now laid more than 100,000 kilometres of fibre across the country.

And that national build is now translating into on-the-ground delivery, with:

- Around 84% of locations progressed through detailed design,
- Around 30% in construction, and;
- Around 35,000 premises already able to order a fibre upgrade - with more becoming ready each month.

This is not infrastructure that is only suitable for this generation of use cases.

We see that the demand placed on networks over the next decade is changing in both scale and shape.

Australians are moving towards always-on digital experiences - and as applications become more interactive, more real-time, and more embedded into daily life and work, the need for stable, predictable performance grows.

And that includes the shift toward more two-way activity, where uploads matter alongside downloads, often simultaneously, and often in real time.

We're talking about far more than Artificial Intelligence.

AI applications - as quickly evolving as they are - are just one of *many* applications and use cases that are demanding more from networks.

Predictive capability is being built into application use, so consumers always have what they need, when they want it, from their smart devices and applications.

This is creating a new upstream demand that's rapidly evolving.

This is where fibre stands apart - it's built for this demand that's growing.

Once the glass is in the ground, it can be upgraded through advances in electronics, moving from GPON to XGS-PON and beyond - without rebuilding the network.

Fibre recovers faster, scales more efficiently, and supports predictable performance at scale.

And fibre also provides the stable foundation that other technologies rely on, including Fixed Wireless, satellite and 5G - all as part of a national network that has to work across dense cities, regional towns and remote locations.

That is why we keep returning to the same long-term principle: we are building infrastructure that is not only fit for today but will support Australia for decades to come.

**Ensuring the benefits are realised by all Australians: outcomes, not just infrastructure**

That brings me to the third point - and in some ways it is the most important.

Because success isn't measured in kilometres of fibre or in the number of premises that are technically serviceable.

It is measured in outcomes: whether Australians - households, small businesses, essential services, and communities - can participate fully in a digital economy that increasingly assumes connectivity.

This is also why it's important to avoid narrowing the conversation to one geography.

Yes, digital inclusion and resilience are often discussed through a regional lens - and those challenges are real - but the obligation is broader: inclusion is about people and outcomes, not just technologies.

And the truth is: *the network doesn't stop at fibre.*

We're continuing to strengthen our HFC network - modernising infrastructure and improving reliability for millions of customers.

We've expanded and upgraded our Fixed Wireless footprint, extending coverage and lifting performance for regional communities.

And we're progressing the transition of Sky Muster to Low Earth Orbit - helping ensure Australians in the most remote parts of the country continue to have choice of competitive, quality connectivity.

Taken together, this is about building a more capable national network - one that works across metro, regional and remote Australia.

This whole-of-network approach is also evident in our future commitments.

At completion by December 2030, the current program is expected to deliver:

- Around **94%** of the fixed line footprint capable of multi-gig speeds, and;
- In regional Australia, multi-gig capable services for around **2.78 million premises - or 99% of the regional fixed-line footprint.**

But even that level of capability does not automatically translate into benefit.

The next phase - for all of us - is about adoption and use.

And from 1 July, we take another step forward.

For Fibre to the Curb customers, the requirement to order a higher-speed tier to trigger a full fibre upgrade will be removed. This is a practical change that makes fibre more accessible, and another lever to support uptake.

It's about helping Australians realise what's already available to them; choosing services that reflect how they live and work; and experiencing the difference in everyday life.

That's where industry partnership becomes essential again - not just in building networks, but in reducing friction, improving the upgrade journey, and lifting the in-home experience.

This is important, because it means customers are actually experiencing the performance the network, and therefore reaping the benefit of the investment.

And this is also where "serving Australia" goes beyond the network itself.

In our recent Senate Estimates opening statement, we spoke about practical outcomes for communities - including connecting more than 30,000 families through the School Student Broadband Initiative, supporting over 1,000 community WiFi services in evacuation centres, and progressing the expansion of these STAND sites to strengthen resilience ahead of the next high-risk weather season.

Resilience is not theoretical.

The 2025–26 high-risk weather season again underscored the magnitude and complexity of operating national infrastructure in increasingly challenging conditions - with flooding, cyclones, storms and bushfires impacting hundreds of thousands of services, primarily due to loss of mains power rather than damage to network assets.

And those events reinforced something we have seen repeatedly: full fibre networks are inherently more resilient than legacy copper technologies.

In Chinchilla, Queensland, a fully fibre-served community, the town was effectively underwater, yet the fibre network remained intact.

As floodwaters receded, services were restored quickly, supporting community recovery.

In nearby areas relying on legacy technologies, outages persisted longer due to reliance on powered infrastructure in the field.

The contrast is clear. As more Australians transition to fibre, they experience these resilience benefits firsthand.

So, when we talk about ensuring the benefits of this national investment are realised by Australians, this is what we mean: not abstract capability, but practical outcomes.

Performance that holds up.

Restoration that is faster.

And a network that supports communities when conditions are at their most difficult.

## **Closing**

As I close this morning, I want to come back to where we started - our shared responsibility, and the long-term nature of what we are building together.

Today I've spoken about three things:

- First, delivering for Australians with a relentless focus on consistency and reliability.
- Second, why fibre is at the centre of changing demand, and the foundation for what comes next.
- And third, the opportunity and the obligation to ensure the benefits of this national investment are realised broadly, in outcomes that Australians can feel in their everyday lives.

Taken together, these are different parts of the same story: how this industry continues to lift the performance, capability and reach of infrastructure that Australians rely on every day - often without thinking about it.

There has been real progress. And there is still more to do.

But the direction is clear: we are progressing modern, high-performing, sovereign digital infrastructure that will underpin Australia's economic and social development for decades to come - and we will do that in the spirit of service to the nation.

That is a shared task, and a shared opportunity and it relies on how we continue to work together: across networks, across retail, and across the broader ecosystem to deliver outcomes that are consistent, reliable, and increasingly aligned to how Australians actually use connectivity.

Thank you for your time this morning, and I hope you enjoy the rest of the Summit.