

Good morning, it's great to be here again at Commsday Melbourne Congress together with my peers and industry colleagues, on what I'm sure will be another very interesting couple of days of thought-provoking speeches and presentations.

I would like to start by acknowledging and giving thanks to the traditional owners of the land on which we are holding today's event.

I would like to say thank you to Minister Fletcher for opening the event, and of course, I must also thank Grahame Lynch and his team at CommsDay for inviting me again to speak today.

Can I also thank Commsday for keeping us all informed daily on events in our industry.

Being here in front of you all is a particularly significant milestone for me as nbn's CEO as it will be the last Commsday event where I will be speaking to you as the chief executive of this network in its build phase.

That's because in less than nine months, by the end of June 2020, the major construction component of the nbn network will be complete, on budget and on time, as around 11.5 million homes and businesses are made ready to connect.

Completing the build next year will be an incredible feat for two reasons.

The first is that the formation of this network changed the competitive landscape of Australia's telecoms sector for the better. It's helped boost retail competition, improve telco services in the bush, and fundamentally changed the way Australians live and work by offering universal broadband access across the continent.

As just one example, but an important example, this had a significant impact on rural and regional Australia,, where the nbn has made a major difference by allowing new retail entrants to compete; by improving how people connect with each other; by providing the digital platforms that businesses need to thrive in the bush; and by laying the infrastructure platforms that allow distance education and better healthcare to be delivered to Australians.

The second reason this is an important achievement is because of the sheer complexity involved in rolling out this infrastructure project across the entire continent.

Over the last decade nbn has rolled out this network from coast to coast, we've launched satellites into orbit, hauled fibre through the nation's busiest city centres, we've bored under rivers and laid submarine cables to connect islands – all to bring better broadband services and competition to this nation.

While facing these considerable challenges, we've had to meet a range of objectives for our company, the telecoms industry and the connectivity goals of the nation.

- First, we must meet the Statement of Expectations from the Federal Government to complete the build, connect Australian homes and businesses, and deliver a high quality, fast broadband service.
- Second, we need to work with the telecoms industry to create the right conditions to allow retailers and nbn itself to thrive and prosper in the long term so we can continue to reinvest into this important asset.

And this reinvestment is crucial for the ongoing economic and social prosperity of the nation.

- And third - and most importantly - we need to ensure that we deliver the best possible experience for customers once they are on the nbn network.

The early years of the rollout was all about setting up the company and getting the rollout started.

The next phase was about scaling the company and progressing the rollout. This involved putting in place the right people and processes to deliver broadband quickly to as many people as possible with the best broadband tools at our disposal.

Now that the build is fast approaching completion, our focus must shift.

Today is all about finishing the job, making sure Australian individuals and businesses make the most of the network, and most importantly, improving the customer experience.

I cannot stress that last point enough. I truly believe that creating good customer experiences will define the success of this industry over the next decade.

A good customer experience and a bad one can be the difference between using this asset and not using it.

If we fail as an industry in providing that good customer experience, then we as a nation will lose out on the social and economic benefits that nbn can deliver.

To keep us focused on the many benefits that this network can unlock, we at nbn have adopted a new purpose: to lift the digital capability of Australia.

This purpose really underscores what nbn is all about for me.

It's about providing a stable, resilient and secure digital backbone to support Australians through the digital age as they open new businesses, or access new forms of online learning or healthcare.

It's our purpose that drives us everyday.

We are a company focused on what we can do for the nation.

How we can uplift digital capability so peoples' lives are better; so job opportunities are greater; so people can live where they choose; so education and health is improved.

And so Australia remains competitive in a global economy and stays a great place to live.

Examples of how this plays out include the business sector, agriculture health, tourism and education.

BUSINESS

A central part of building a sustainable business at nbn will be helping other businesses make the most of the benefits that broadband can bring.

And as the economic engine of the nation, it's vitally important that nbn supports Australian businesses.

Providing competitive broadband offerings to help meet the needs of business has always been part of nbn's intent and by 2023 we anticipate annual revenue from business of all sizes - from micro-businesses right through to the very largest enterprises – to be \$1.2 billion.

This is not only important for nbn's future strategic goals, but it will also be an important contributor to the nation's economic prosperity.

Providing Australian businesses with access to high-speed broadband and connectivity supports the creation of new jobs, it helps grow new businesses and contributes to growing our GDP.

Indeed, it's estimated that the combined impact of growth in new businesses and jobs, as

well as our changing workforce, will boost Australia's GDP by up to \$10.4 billion at the completion of the rollout.

We are already well on our way to achieving our ambitious targets in the business space.

Today there are more than 600,000 businesses now using the nbn™ network, and a dynamic market of retail providers looking to make sure they have the business-grade nbn services to help fully realise their potential.

We continue to invest in our capability to support businesses of all kinds and have launched specific products and services for this segment, introduced enhanced service levels, and put in place dedicated teams to make sure businesses have the support they need to get the most out of the nbn.

It's a mark of our growing maturity as an organisation that we are moving to address such an important area of the economy. And there's more to come.

At the core of our strategy is the need for business – like any customer – to have the right products and services to suit their needs, to have the scale, simplicity and capability to deliver.

But as we continue to focus on this important segment, we know we also have much to learn.

That's why we have been working hard behind the scenes to improve our processes in this area, to provide simplicity, flexibility and better access to commercial arrangements for the benefit of industry and the business market.

Clearly these are great opportunities for business and for the economy, and nbn has a strong role to play to ensure they are maximised.

HEALTH

We also see the health sector as another vital sector for the nation that will greatly benefit from the nbn.

In health our teams are working hard at both the state and federal government level to understand how the nbn can better support telehealth services and applications, and particularly in the bush where the tyranny of distance can have serious consequences for individuals' health.

The NBN has a critical role to ensure rural and remote health practitioners can access necessary support, advice and education to improve services and health outcomes for people in the bush.

And as people with chronic conditions increasingly manage their health care at home, especially as they age, access to high speed internet will become more and more important wherever they live.

To better understand how we can assist in this area, we have teamed up with the National Rural Health Alliance to host the industry's first digital health roundtable on November 8 this year.

This roundtable will bring all levels of government, practitioners, hardware/software providers and network providers together to better understand and promote the adoption of digital health services.

We know telehealth is a constantly evolving field with everchanging technology and training requirements, but there are already a number of businesses using telehealth to service a wide range of clients.

AGRICULTURE

We also see nbn playing a critical role in the development of Australia's important agriculture sector.

As you all know, the ag sector is not just the lifeline of Australia's food production line, it's a deeply etched part of the nation's identity and an important economic contributor to our gross domestic product.

Right now, the agricultural sector contributes three per cent to Australia's GDP and, as Australia grows, we need the industry to grow too.

But we all know that the farm of the future will be very different to the farm of today, and in order for Australia's farms to be competitive and access the technologies that will allow them to remain competitive, they will need to increasingly adopt technologies like automation, the internet of things, remote access and interconnectivity which are all underpinned by a robust, secure network like the nbn.

To help make this transition and to further encourage digital adoption in the ag sector, we have partnered with the National Farmers Federation and are also working closely with a number of stakeholder groups including Meat & Livestock Australia, Agforce, and

the Country Women's Association.

We have also developed great relationships at the highest levels in state governments and are currently in discussions as to how we can work together to help state-based economies and regional areas benefit from the nbn.

The obvious areas of collaboration with states are in Education and Health, but the opportunities certainly do not end there.

These are just a few examples of the work we are increasingly doing with industry and government to ensure Australia's business sectors can grow, thrive and ultimately lift the digital capability of Australia.

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

It's humbling to think that we as an industry, and the services we provide, can make a real difference in these critical sectors - differences that will not just help to build a stronger economy for the nation, but more prosperous lives for Australians.

But to get to the point where we can focus on lifting the digital capability of Australia, we still have much work to do.

The most critical piece of work facing us at the moment – and I believe work in this area will never truly stop - is building a sustainable telecoms industry.

NBN has done much to change the competitive fabric of the telecoms sector by rolling out broadband infrastructure to areas never before exposed to the benefits of fast connectivity.

This recasting of the telecoms market has allowed retailers to directly access broadband infrastructure in more locations across Australia, offering greater choice and better services for consumers and businesses.

But to realise the benefits that the nbn can deliver, we need to have the right balance between industry economics, nbn sustainability, customer experience, and regulation.

There are two points I'd like to touch on regarding industry economics.

The first is on pricing.

As you know, we continue to consult with the industry on our wholesale pricing plans.

A critical part of serving customers hinges on not only creating a sustainable nbn, but also a sustainable industry where we can all work together to bring connectivity and its benefits to more homes and businesses.

As the industry would have seen through these latest consultations, we are prepared to meet the market with new pricing bundles that not only satisfy the data and speed needs of customers, but also the economic needs of our retail partners with greater discounts and larger inclusions.

The strategy underpinning our pricing will always focus on striking the balance between creating a competitive environment for internet and phone providers, while ensuring we can create a sustainable business model to allow us to reinvest into the network and deliver the social and economic benefits that broadband promises.

While pricing will always play a large role in industry economics, particularly on existing customer bases, we are also developing a range of programs designed to help connect the unconnected, so more people can get online and participate in the digital age.

These new pricing initiatives, and more to come in the future, show that nbn is listening to the needs of industry and consumers.

CX

This brings me to my second point.

While pricing will always play an important part, the most critical factor in building a sustainable sector, in my view, is nbn and the industry's relationship with the customer.

Many of you will be aware that we recently started the consultation process for the next round of our Wholesale Broadband Agreement, or what we call WBA4.

Our vision for the WBA4 is aligned to our purpose, to lift the digital capability of Australia.

As I mentioned earlier, to deliver on that purpose there are many things we can address:

- We can look at how we can support businesses with better connectivity and productivity gains.
- We can work closer with healthcare organisations to improve remote diagnosis and treatments.

- Or with education departments and organisations to assist in connectivity for schools and learning institutions.
- And we can provide the platform and tools to collapse the tyranny distance and help rural and regional communities thrive in the digital age.
- And to ensure that our tourism industry has the infrastructure it needs in the modern world.

But underpinning all these ambitions is a common thread: the customer.

It's critical we put the customer at the forefront of all our thinking. And this is worth repeating.

Because if customers are not being treated right, if they are not getting the service they pay for and expect, and if they are not getting the connection experience they need to enjoy the benefits of fast broadband, then we as an industry are falling over at the first hurdle.

Our WBA4 is built around this making sure we don't trip up.

It's about achieving a level of balance between us and our retailers, not just so we clearly understand each others' roles and responsibilities, but so we can work in lock-step to make sure all Australian get the most out of their broadband connections.

We want to work with the industry on this WBA in a way that will ensure an even more collaborative partnership between nbn and RSPs so we can better understand customer needs and pain points throughout the end to end customer journey and deliver a better overall customer experience on the network.

There are many things that nbn as a wholesaler and the telco industry can do as a whole to improve customer service.

But I believe it will be by working together, through collaboration and partnerships, that we will make the most difference.

Between us, we already know where CX can be better and we know where it suffers most.

WBA4 will be an important tool to address these issues by laying the foundation for CX over coming years and showing how we have matured as an industry to solve some of these common pain points.

REGULATORY INTERVENTION

I wanted to touch on the recent release of the ACCC's draft determination into its wholesale service standards inquiry.

I want to start by putting it on the record that we absolutely support the ACCC having a role in overseeing service standards.

And we are supportive of regulatory action where market failure is present. Afterall, nbn was born from such an environment.

We also support the ACMA's role in regulating these service standards to ensure that if a customer is inconvenienced by a poor connection experience, then it is the customer who should be compensated.

I also believe the industry should collaborate on behalf of the customer rather than having customers rely purely on regulation.

In our view, the WBA4 can fulfil two main functions – first, it can continue to govern the supply of nbn’s products and services to RSPs; and second, it can support a more collaborative partnership with industry to drive co-investment in the performance of the network and deliver a better experience for customers.

We have a major role in shaping customer experience and we are not shying away from this.

We have, in fact, made significant investments in recent years in this area to improve the overall experience of our customers, and we continue to recognise there is always more to do to meet customer needs and enhance overall satisfaction.

But as a mature industry, responsible for this essential service that is broadband connectivity, we have an obligation to tackle these issues together, head-on.

As an industry we should seek commercial arrangements between nbn and our retailers with customer experience in mind.

We do of course work in a regulated industry, and nbn will continue to work with regulators on sensible outcomes.

The shift from being builder of this vast network, to a full-scale service organisation, comes with new challenges but also some great opportunities – the most important of which will be our renewed ability to focus on the customer like never before.

This is a huge opportunity for the nbn and indeed the industry.

It will be the beginning of a new era where we at nbn will devote people and resources to giving customers the best possible experience when connecting and using this network.

And for the industry it will present itself as a real opportunity to differentiate on service and customer care.

ROAD AHEAD

Transformation is a constant force in the world of technology and telecommunications.

It's been no different at nbn and part of becoming a mature service delivery organisation means we still have much to learn.

We've already done a fair amount of growing up in public, and I expect we will do some more as we move through completion of the rollout and into our next phase.

But I am energised by what lays ahead, as we seek new and better ways to do business, to connect customers with great experiences, and provide this essential service that will deliver new prosperity to this great nation.

The nbn's aim is to connect all Australians, no matter where they live, to ensure they have the same opportunities to the economic and social good that access to fast broadband can unlock.

Together as an industry, I believe we can achieve this.

Thank you.