



NBN Survey Results Report

Strathbogie Shire Business Connectivity Survey August 2020

The Federal Government inquiry into 'The Business Case for The NBN and The Experiences of Small Businesses'.

This survey forms part of the submission to the inquiry and addresses the concerns of business owners about the quality and affordability of the NBN.

Survey of Business Owners in the Strathbogie Shire Council area conducted between 25 August 2020 and 31 August 2020.

Survey emailed to 527 businesses with 79 (15%) completing the survey.

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Question 1. Do you use an internet connection for your business?

Yes 79

No 0

Result 100% of businesses surveyed used the internet.

Question 2. What type of internet connection do you have?

NBN Landline 23

NBN Fixed Wireless 27

NBN Satellite (Skymuster) 14

4G Mobile Broadband/Wireless Broadband 10

ADSL/Cable 5

Result 34% NBN Fixed Wireless, 29% NBN Landline, 18% NBN Satellite, 13% 4G Mobile & Wireless and 6% ADSL/Cable.

Question 3. Have you experienced slow internet speeds or drop-outs?

Yes 71

No 8

Result 90% of businesses surveyed experienced slow speed and drop-outs.

Question 4. How often are slow speeds or drop-outs?

Daily 43

Weekly 17

Monthly 10

Result 62% of businesses surveyed experienced Daily drop-outs, 24% Weekly drop-outs and 14% Monthly drop-outs.

Question 5. Is the internet slow when uploading large documents, videos, photos etc?

Yes 61

No 18

Result 77% of businesses surveyed experienced slow upload speeds.

Question 6. Have you used video conferencing (Skype, Webex, Facetime, Teams, Zoom etc) during Covid-19 to keep in touch with staff, suppliers or others?

Yes 61

No 18

Result 77% of businesses surveyed used video conferencing during Covid-19.

Question 7. Did you experience any issues with video conferencing such as drop-outs, slow speed or time delays?

Yes 46

No 29

Result 61% of businesses surveyed experienced drop-outs, slow speed and time delays during Covid-19.

Question 8. Please describe your issues with video conferencing.

- *Office internet fine with skype, issues with other people calling in and dropping out, audio fading out.*
- *Slow speeds. Screen breaking up. Poor voice quality.*
- *Drop-outs and glitches. My son is doing VCE and the unreliable connection and frequent drop-outs mean we have had to hot spot during his SAC's and other more important online learning as well as when I have important zoom meetings as we are consistently experiencing long drop-outs - ie at least 4-5 per week.*
- *Distortion. Poor syncing.*
- *Drop-outs, freezing, slow speeds.*
- *Difficulties connecting video and voice.*
- *Latency .. drop-outs .. poor audio.*
- *Due to the limitation of 25mbps, and with multiple people in the office using the same bandwidth due to social distancing requirements with COVID-19, we get drop outs and loss of internet, which is a concern when holding calls with external parties/clients/potential customers where more than one person is required on the video conference. As a result, most of us move to mobile hotspots when doing internet critical tasks to ensure connectivity.*
- *Time delays, slow speed and drop outs.*
- *It appears as though I suffer intermittent slows associated with congestion. So kids at home on internet has slowed my EFTPOS where I experience most of my drop outs and slows. I have back up on 3G network but this is usually congested at the same time.*
- *Lose picture and sound.*
- *Constant drop-outs regardless of time where we have to constantly log on and off to get through meetings.*

Question 8 continued..

- *Delayed and some days has dropped out, inconsistent and therefore unreliable when running multiple businesses. Has financial and strategic impact short and long term.*
- *Buffering all the time, worse in bad weather.*
- *Inconsistent connection with the connection 'hiccuping' causing low res, lagged video and gurgled audio.*
- *Connection lags and then we drop out completely. NBN is unreliable at best. Have been unable to join Zoom meetings.*
- *Slow speeds.*
- *Incredibly slow, jerky.*
- *Slow, drop-outs, phasing.*
- *Audio dropping in and out. Image freezing on screen.*
- *On-Screen Message that internet is unstable and videos of other participants freezes and audio break up.*
- *Freezing and slow to connect.*
- *Bad connection. Frozen screens. Delayed audio.*
- *There is a definite lag between the lips moving and the voice you hear. Also video conferencing is very "jerky". And don't bother running video and sharing your screen in a zoom meeting the lag between you clicking on something and your client seeing what you are clicking on is frustrating!*
- *Uploads and downloads are slow for zoom conferencing. video will freeze audio will lag.*
- *The meeting will freeze and I will have to logout and log in again and I normally miss out on a vital part of the meeting! I can't use my camera either as the internet isn't good enough.*
- *Sometimes the video might be out of sync with the person talking or there might be a delay so that we would inadvertently talk over one another.*
- *Freeze, disconnection, drop-outs, etc.*
- *Drops out numerous times and is slow trying to reconnect.*
- *Delayed.*
- *Lagging, freezing, dropouts, feedback, screeching white noise background, poor picture quality.*
- *Periodic depixelating video breaks up.*
- *Speeds can vary depending on the day, time & weather. Our NBN based phones are AWFUL, we have regular drop outs that make us look incompetent!*
- *Constant glitches and buffering - to the point where it can't be used. The trouble is, our mobile reception in Euroa is rather awful, too.*
- *Poor quality vision and audio and often drops out.*
- *Don't bother as it is too slow.*
- *Drop-outs, Intermittent sound and pictures.*
- *Delayed and very slow.*
- *Sometimes lagging with audio and video but mainly video, hasn't been too much of an issue.*
- *Slow, lagging of images, sound lagging as well.*

Question 8 continued..

- *Drops out and freezes.*
- *Drop-outs, freezing of video and voice delays.*
- *It is almost impossible to use video conferencing or Zoom due to drop outs and slow service with the ADSL.*
- *Slow.*
- *Slow speed, drop-outs, time delays.*

Question 9. Has poor internet coverage had a negative effect on your business?

Yes 51

No 24

Result *68% of businesses surveyed experienced poor internet coverage which had a negative effect on their business.*

Question 10. Please describe your negative internet experience.

- *Makes it less likely to use zoom as can't be trusted.*
- *Our phones are VOIP, over the NBN too. We also have 4G backup, because the NBN goes down so frequently. If it rains, the NBN connection becomes unreliable. Most of us also have our mobile phones on 4G as backup, to hotspot to our laptops as an emergency measure. All our work is stored on a cloud server, so if we can't access the internet, we cannot work. If the NBN stops, the phones go down. This all has a HUGE impact on business continuity, and staff frustration levels.*
- *Costs time whilst down.*
- *Staff working from home have has various success. Some employees experience multiple dropouts in an hour on remote connections to the office server making working from home extremely difficult.*
- *We have not been able to update and include new technology on our website and other communications as it is taking too long to do updates etc. I was driving to Melbourne frequently (pre-restrictions) and updating at the office in Melbourne as it was too difficult to do.*
- *Customer complaint about poor wifi. And wifi signals not stable.*
- *Most importantly lack of reliable phone communication due to WiFi calling not working effectively.*
- *We have had to install expensive equipment to secure reliable internet services.*
- *Processing sales. In some cases I have taken IOUs which is never a good thing especially with certain customers.*
- *Terrible, slow, days where it is not working, NBN worse than original internet not worth changing to as slower drops out more and much more expensive for worse result, if I had an option I would not have changed.*

Question 10 continued..

- *We have 11 eftpos terminals that can experience significant lag, as well as web based programs for ordering. Can become costly with the extra time its taking to submit.- we have spent considerable amounts of money, have tried NBN satellite, broadband and 18mths ago had 4g internet and boosters installed. We are once again looking at upgrading internet equipment to try and achieve an improved internet service. With our accounting and horse management software programs being cloud based we often struggle to even access these imperative business systems.*
- *What do you think.*
- *We invested in an office in the town to combat internet issues/access, but work now is required outside 9am - 5pm with businesses and we still need to operate from home.*
- *Slows down our office work.*
- *Dropping out of meetings. Then having to rejoin via phone.*
- *We lost tenders for big events due to the internet speed we are able to offer customers.*
- *Our telephones consistently drop out, lost business.*
- *Lost funding and other applications in portals where you can't save and everything drops out.*
- *Unable to complete discussions online and reverting to phone call instead. Inconsistent connections doesn't give you the confidence to carry out effective communication online.*
- *Outages on data connections result in lost sales because out telephone sales team loose access to the sales programs and/or the connection is lost to the eCommerce platform.*
- *Unable to communicate in the way we should be able to with better internet speed.*
- *We are a Motel and are unable to check people in at times, also negative reviews due to WiFi drop-outs.*
- *Can take 3 mins to upload a doc working through a VPN it is very slow compared to other people with different type of connections.*
- *A drover's dog should have known that wireless last mile in Violet Town DOES NOT WORK AND NEVER WILL!!!! It is basic Year 10 physics. The more people on the 'roadway' the slower the traffic until it drops to nil. The LIBERAL NATIONALS ARE RESPONSIBLE for giving us a No Bloody Network dog of a system!!!*
- *With a move to more on-line meetings the slow internet connection and occasional drop out do not give customers the excellent customer experience I am striving for.*
- *Video courses are either stopped or put off to other times. Where the internet could be better in speed late at night.*
- *I have not been able to update my website regularly and it takes forever to connect to vital websites. I struggle to upload images for our sales and will have to go in to town to do this. It's not good enough.*
- *Loss of productive/efficient time for management and business calls.*

Question 10 continued..

- *Perhaps due to our street having old copper cables, the internet will be slower during bad weather or drop out completely. This can mean work does not get done on time.*
- *It's very frustrating when your half way through doing invoices and I do up to 200 invoices when a message comes on screen too say there has been an error with internet connection and then it just shuts myob down. Now I don't know whether my work is done or not and have to reload check and redo and this can happen 3 to 4 times on the day. It draws out the task immensely. Getting onto web sites can take trying up to six times just to connect. Trying to pay bills getting onto the bank site when you think your just connected and go to do something and it disconnects. Have sent emails to clients that never got there. This leads to frustration and you give up the task to do another time, this leaves the job not done. It doesn't make a harmonious or efficient work environment when it's not working properly.*
- *Slow turn around times. Cannot download or upload decent sized doc when required or contribute to some web based events as it is too slow. Multiple uses are unable to maintain a secure connection/speed.*
- *Interrupted meetings and demonstrations where I miss important information. Training with gaps unable to answer questionnaire have had to redo.*
- *Some days struggle just to open our emails.*
- *Losing clients due to poor quality. Slow receival and sending of emails, poor picture quality, freezing. Monthly fees for connections get wasted and under utilised due to time and money spent in just trying to connect, buffering etc.*
- *Frustration.*
- *Slow speeds, especially when it's been raining. Inability to complete tasks, or having to drive out of town and use my mobile phone as a hotspot to send/receive files.*
- *Clients become very unhappy.*
- *It can be the ultimate time waster! When it drops in and out it can make a 5 min task take forever. It is embarrassing if the service drops below a level that I can't transfer phone calls internally. Imagine ringing a dealership to buy a new tractor only to be told they can't transfer the call to the salesman because of the internet has dropped out and he will have to call you back! Very unprofessional.*
- *Creates extra workload for staff and heavily affects the guest experience at our hotel.*
- *I work off farm as an accountant and am unable to use the company's accounting software because of our slow speeds at home. Farming operation is also badly affected as we are also in a mobile phone black spot (12 kms west of Nagambie).*
- *Unable to download documents. Missed inwards and outwards emails during periods when there are internet issues. Slow speeds.*
- *Extremely difficult to run a business that relies on the internet 100% of the time when it is so slow and drops out all the time.*
- *Reduces our staff's ability to work productively.*
- *Emails not sending and guests not being able to contact us as phone line says busy tone when it's not.*

Question 10 continued..

- *I pay for unlimited service and have begged Telstra for support or an NBN connection to no avail. Customers continually complain about the internet service, this is also bad for my mental health, I am trying to deal with a situation I can't help, very distressing. Have had to purchase a dongle to be able to work during the Coronavirus.*
- *I have had trouble interacting with customers.*
- *When internet goes down we can't receive phone calls, emails or online bookings*
- *Loss of productive/efficient time for management and business calls.*

Question 11. Was pricing and affordability a factor when choosing your internet plan?

Yes 33

No 42

Result 56% of businesses surveyed said that pricing was not a deciding factor when choosing their internet plan, compared to 44% of business who said price was a deciding factor.

Question 12. Please explain your thoughts about internet pricing as it relates to your business.

- *Happy to pay the price if we get the service.*
- *It's very good value and Activ8me offer excellent support when required.*
- *We are rural and have found NBN to be much better than the old ADSL. The pricing was lower when we switched over. I have heard people who live in town complain that NBN is more expensive than other suppliers, but we did not have that wide a selection being out of town.*
- *We believe the price for the speed is expensive in Australia compared with an internet connection we have overseas for a less price and much faster both download and up load.*
- *Very reasonable.*
- *Low quality for high rates ... it's a no brainer. The LNP killed what would have been a decent standard in Aus. NBN have no right to advertise their service as fast or inviting. It's a comedy without a decent punchline.*
- *Yes.*
- *Not worth it.*
- *Am still with Telstra, their service is not so hot, but when I priced the change over to NBN, FORGET IT. No guarantee I would get signal anyway, Not happy with Telstra Sales Staff, but sticking with the Devil I know. Personal opinion, all internet providers are "thieves" not worried about providing service, but filling their pockets with dollars.*
- *I would like to have access to unlimited NBN at a reasonable cost, as people can do in larger cities.*

Question 12 continued..

- *It's expensive particularly compared to other countries. We need internet to run our business yet we need it to be fast and consistent.*
- *I would be comfortable with the pricing if the speed and reliability was consistent. Unfortunately it sometimes isn't and it seems that we are expected to accept this as normal.*
- *Sufficient bandwidth and speed are more relevant to than is the price, but the price of services must always be evaluated. It is anti-competitive that metro based competitors have a bigger range of services and generally at lower prices than regionally based businesses.*
- *It's fine.*
- *It is what it is.*
- *It is more expensive than city based products that have unlimited downloads. We do not have unlimited as it is so expensive.*
- *Expensive for the quality.*
- *NBN IS MORE EXPENSIVE.*
- *I work from home (as do most people at the moment) so I need to have the fastest possible plan that I can afford. We need to be able to have multiple people using the internet for school, work or streaming/gaming at the same time.*
- *I was prepared to pay more out of desperation but was told they could not guarantee it would be a better service.*
- *Unlimited plans a fallacy. Either not available for country users, too expensive or nowhere near what city people get in deals, quality, etc. Off peak plans set unrealistic times to assist with downloads eg 1am to 5am?!!!*
- *Reliability and affordability are vital.*
- *Wanted a competitive price with good service.*
- *Irrelevant - I can't get faster speeds, anyway.*
- *Current service is not expensive. Delivery is the issue as we cannot generally offer free wi-fi to patron as we don't want to slow delivery for our own business operations.*
- *It wouldn't seem to be expensive if it was reliable, but as it is not, it is very frustrating to pay for something that is sub par.*

Question 13. Has your internet performance changed during the Covid-19 period?

Yes 15

No 18

Result *55% of businesses surveyed believed their internet performance changed during Covid-19 compared to 45% who did not experience a change.*

Question 14. Tell us how your internet performance has changed during Covid-19.

- *Seems slower due to greater usage by community???*
- *Slowed with the extra use.*
- *Mobile service is ridiculously bad as is internet bandwidth bottlenecks.*
- *Slow and drops out.*
- *Even more slower if possible.*
- *Its slower and more unreliable as more use it. We should be receiving what we pay for. High speed internet.*
- *At different time of the day, we have had difficulty maintaining reasonable speed. This is usually late afternoon and sometimes early evening.*
- *Because we've been using it via VPN to enable work from home.*
- *Slowed or drops out more often.*
- *It seems that daytime speeds are slower.*
- *Slower speeds and drop-outs.*
- *Using it more yet picture quality and Skype standard worse.*
- *More drop-outs, given that more people are online.*
- *As there are more people at home using internet more eg. students and people working from home it has slowed.*

Question 15. Please add any further comments about your NBN experience.

- *I pay a lot for my phone solution, with all the backups, etc, just because of unreliability.*
- *Now we have access to the NBN wireless, we have had good experience. Previously when our only connection was via 4G, everything was nearly impossible - even internet banking. Videos were impossible. Many people in our area still have no access to NBN and therefore are relying 4G and 3G connections, both of which very poor.*
- *The only issue we had was the old copper lines are still used from the NBN Node to our business premises. We were one of the first connected, and often when another business connected to the node we lost our connection- the old copper junction point was a mess and in poor shape. Since everyone has now connected, we've had no issues at all.*
- *Seems to be more slow downs and drop-outs in wet weather. Have noticed speed decrease when students work from home. Large decrease at 4 when kids go onto Netflix.*
- *It has been a huge improvement for us. We are ten minutes out of town.*
- *Bad experience.*
- *Hope this is helpful and thank you.*
- *Equipment typically provided by Telstra to support NBN Connections is fragile - damages easily due to local power outages and tends to brick connection. NBN support teams overseas are not up to date with current practices supported by local support teams and local technicians.*
- *On the whole our NBN experience is good, however post COVID it has had problems.*

Question 15 continued..

- *We have only been connected to the NBN for a couple of months as it took a time to convince providers and the NBN authorities that we could see two fixed wireless towers from our premises. Pretty happy with the service so far not withstanding the comments about cost.*
- *We have been trying to switch over to NBN for over 12 months. Continual dates to connect only for the technicians to arrive and find another fault with the infrastructure in the area. As soon as a connection date expires we have gone back into the pool to be assigned a new case manager, taking several months each time. We have had to engage a local data/voice technician to liaise with Telstra so we can try and achieve the best outcome for our business and therefore hopefully limiting any downtime. They want to take the easiest option to get people switched over whether or not it's the best option for the business.*
- *Pricing needs to reflect the actual quality of service . At our property in Bailieston, only a 10 min drive from NAGAMBIE we can only utilise Satellite, which is less than ideal , fixed ADSL was not even an option:(. This is pretty poor delivery of a 'so called ' national network. All in all it's a joke really... and a costly one. Political maneuvering prior to elections and a sell out by Turnbull cost the Australian public dearly .. let's face it .. that's the way the cookie crumbled and now we are stuck with an obsolete infrastructure:(*
- *We have had to abandon the NBN for our administrative office personnel and move to the far more expensive 4G connection - the speeds we obtain through this are at least >100mbps, and more reliable for the bandwidth requirements of the business. I am happy to have a conversation with someone on this matter, as we provide emergency services through our aerial firefighting capability and connectivity is key to our ability to enact this critical community service.*
- *We found NBN satellite to be unusable, constant drop-outs, slow, lots of downtime/no service.*
- *Could be better.*
- *Rubbish.*
- *Terrible.*
- *The lack of consistent service makes it more time consuming when doing even the basic of jobs in our work place. The old fashioned dial up internet connection is better than what we have now in Binney street Euroa.*
- *We need more data, NBN satellite is limiting, children cannot home school from home and we cannot run our businesses effectively or on demand which is what is required with online businesses and global companies.*
- *When applying for NBN Skymuster was given a 6 week waiting time for installment as (my area is considered 'Rural) which would have made Working from home impossible (no-low 3g+4g reception). Solution was to go with a local Wireless broadband provider which offered comparable speeds and prices to NBN and was connected within 24hrs of initial contact.*
- *No NBN experience.*
- *We were better off without it.*

Question 15 continued..

- *The NBN is fabulous when working. Remote schooling has also been a challenge with internet speed being very slow.*
- *My largest concern is the restrictions we have on speed due to our distance from the nearest node. We would prefer to utilise a faster speed, however this is not an option available to us.*
- *There is no NBN service available at our location. The business has been required to install its own radio link across to a location where NBN fixed wireless can be accessed.*
- *Are in communication with Optus regarding slow internet speed and have a ticket for the issue, but they have not followed up on it even after we have rung back about it.*
- *The initial connection experience was a pain.*
- *More of a concern is our Telstra Mobile reception (or lack thereof). Ranges between nothing and one bar and only when standing at certain points around the home and sometimes not even then. Yes we have reported it on several occasions but to no avail. Our landline was so bad we recently stopped it - no ability to get it repaired so all we got was sales/ scam calls interrupting our day.*
- *It's absolute rubbish and sooner or later we all will have to have fiber to the home and SPEND the money!!!!*
- *Not what was promised of the speed and we are only 500 mtrs from tower.*
- *There seem to be just as many, if not more drop-outs on the NBN as there were with ADSL.*
- *Poor coverage, slow and very outdated.*
- *I wish I had never gone on NBN I had a better service before. I have spent So many hours on the phone trying to fix slow internet and dropouts.*
- *Difficult to run a business when there are slow speeds and dropouts. It is frustrating, time consuming and often feeling unprofessional when trying to meet deadlines etc and you can't even open an email.*
- *A tower in our area would assist so many. Others near me have much poorer access than ours.*
- *In an emergency, this a huge concern.*
- *We do not have NBN because it does not work here.*
- *Not as reliable as the old service.*
- *FTTP should have been kept - do it once, do it right. Failing that, make sure the copper line from the node is actually up to the task and that storm water incursions into pits are minimised.*
- *It has been very disappointing to experience the changeover and the slow response and care when raising issues has been nothing like I have previously experienced. The service was meant to be an upgrade but the amount of issues we had was not acceptable. If any business can hold off on the change over I would highly recommend them to.*
- *No NBN at this address, have been advised the tower is too far away.*
- *I'm happy and prepared to pay more for reliable internet. There are greater business losses through downtime with the current unreliability of the internet.*

Question 15 continued..

- *I live in the Mitchellstown area and an NBN technician who visited the site would not install fixed wireless as there were "too many trees in the vicinity" and there would be an "interrupted signal" from the existing tower.*
- *I wouldn't mind paying extra for a service that is more reliable.*
- *Our only option is Skymuster which despite all the promises can only offer at best 25MB, and mostly it doesn't even get to that. Nagambie township and surrounds gets between 45-50 MB so we are mostly under half of that, with no promise of better speeds in the future. This combined with poor or no mobile service (despite the fact that we paid to have a Telstra booster installed at the house, which works intermittently and only within metres of the unit inside the house)) makes ordinary business interactions, especially once out on the farm, and at the yards and sheds very difficult.*
- *Internet had fewer dropouts before we went to NBN.*
- *It must be said that the internet speed during covid has slowed and reliability is not as it should be, but it hasn't been as bad as it is over the summer period when we have a huge increase in population. So over all our internet quality is extremely unsatisfactory as a whole!*
- *I have a business grade NBN service and currently due to COVID 19 the business is not operating at full potential.*