

The NBN - job opportunities for ETU members



With the Gillard Labor government back in power it looks as though the \$43 billion NBN will go ahead.

The National Broadband Network (NBN) is the largest infrastructure project in Australia's history. Like all major infrastructure undertakings it needs to be carefully designed and executed to ensure it delivers maximum value to taxpayers.

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) was created to design, build and operate the infrastructure that will enable advanced digital services to be provided to the nation. The government-owned company came into existence in April 2009.

The ETU supports the Federal Government's objectives of advancing Australian society through the provision of high-speed, reliable broadband capacity to as many Australian homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, etc as possible.

It is a progressive project, a job creating project and a skills development project.

In fact, the NBN lists as its key objectives:

- connection of 93 per cent of all Australian premises with fibre-based services and seven per cent with next generation wireless and satellite technologies, subject to final design;
- directly supporting many thousands of local jobs over eight years; and
- providing equal, wholesale access to retailers enabling them to deliver advanced digital services to the nation.

The federal Liberals and Nationals, and some vested media and telco interests, have been criticising the NBN and questioning whether Australia can afford it. That is nonsense and, frankly, typical of the Liberals and Nationals. They are not great believers in government's funding services for working people and their families.

In fact, the Federal Opposition will need to do more than try and frighten people by using terms like 'billions'. Australia's economy is now in the trillions and growing and the NBN will provide massive benefits, across the country, for an annual installation price over eight years of less than 0.5 per cent of that

The NBN's capacity "to provide fibre-based access services with bandwidths of up to 1000 megabytes per second downstream, with the flexibility to add

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The NBN: Building Broadband for all Australians



committed bandwidth to support just-in-time and real-time applications such as video and telephony for consumers, business and government end-users," will drive the growth of whole new employment, entertainment, education and health options – just to list a few areas that will benefit.

The NSW Nurses Association provided just one example recently when it pointed out that the NBN:

Will revolutionise health and aged care services, which already cost Australia more than \$100 billion a year – a figure that is itself growing at over five per cent a year and will total more than \$1 trillion over those same eight years. In 2013-14 Commonwealth expenses alone on health are expected to be at more than \$80 billion and the total size of the Australian economy more than \$1.5 trillion.

And as the technology develops in leaps and bounds over the next few years, the need to have this level of broadband capacity in a patient's home will become apparent to more and more people. In that sense aged care services will also be a major user of this technology.

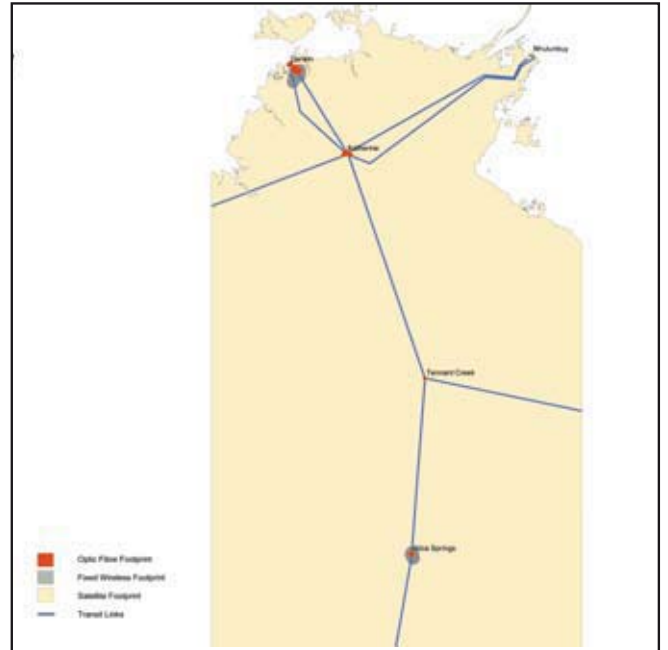
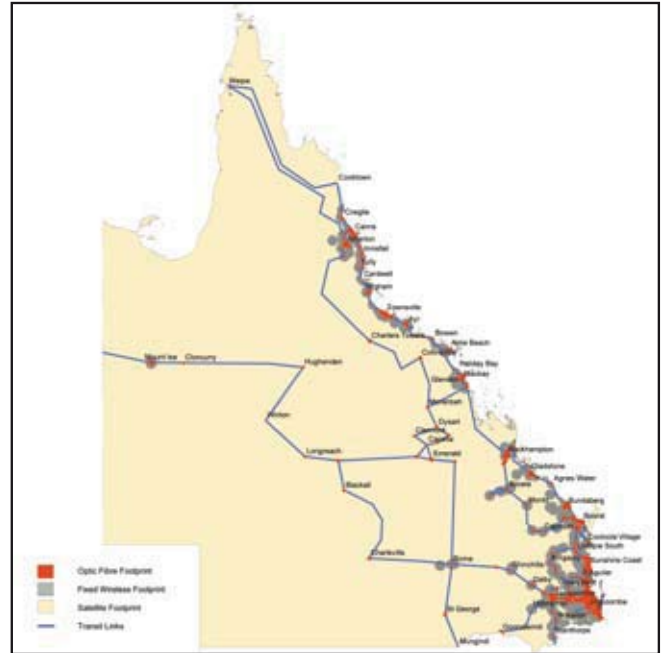
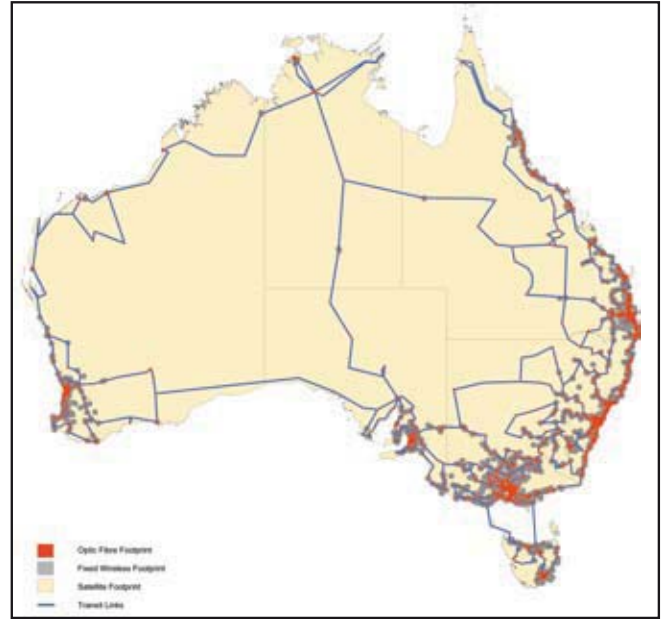
ETU training courses, apprenticeship modules, etc will also be more accessible, and deliverable at a better on-line quality, once more people, including in regional and rural areas, have access to such Internet capacity at home and work.

Of course, during its installation the NBN will also create thousands of jobs for ETU members.

The ETU nationally is in negotiations for an agreement to cover NBN employees and the Townsville pilot rollout, due to start later this year or early next year, will be completed using ETU members at Ergon and various contractors with ETU EBAs.

More information on these negotiations and employment opportunities will be provided when they come to hand.

In the meantime ETU members are encouraged to take an interest in the NBN's development and any members working on the NBN should ensure ETU wage and conditions standards are adhered to.



**More information on the NBN can be found at
www.nbnco.com.au**

