

## **2011- 12 Regional Telecommunications Review** Submission from Telstra

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## Executive summary

Telstra is a major provider of telecommunications services to Australia's regional and rural communities. Telstra has actively partnered with many of our customers to deliver innovative solutions helping regional and rural customers connect with friends, family and the world, to achieve better health and education services, lower costs, improve productivity and deliver greater social inclusion over vast geographies. We detail these experiences in this submission.

Since the last Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) review, Telstra has continued to invest in regional and rural areas across the country. Since 2008, more regional and rural customers are able to access high-speed broadband, mobile broadband, gain access to advanced mobile technology (through the launch of Telstra's 4G LTE network<sup>1</sup>) and experience increased reliability as a result of Telstra's continued commitment. Over time, in real terms, prices have fallen providing greater affordability to customers, regardless of where they live.

Telstra's commitment does not only extend to infrastructure investments, but also programs designed to enhance engagement and participation of our customers in their communities. In the last financial year, the total value of Telstra's social investment across the country was \$248 million. Our social investment comprises: disaster relief and community investment (e.g., Telstra Connected Seniors®, Telstra Foundation®, Telstra Assistance Fund and other programs), which includes funds, donations of goods and service, and the time and expertise of our employees.

In the lead up to the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN), Telstra invites the Government to consider the following as a means to further accelerate the development and readiness of regional and rural customers. These include:

- Government tenders to facilitate build of infrastructure in uncommercial areas (similar to the Royalties for Regions funded Regional Mobile Communication Program (RMCP), WA detailed later in this submission);
- Support for continued partnerships with local communities and/or Government bodies to facilitate build in uncommercial areas;
- Extension of government subsidies to encourage new innovations;
- Traineeships for Indigenous Australians to encourage use of broadband services, and
- Targeted education campaigns.

Telstra's commitment to providing regional and rural Australia with the latest in telecommunications is long standing and Telstra remains dedicated to serving the needs of these customers.

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<sup>1</sup> Telstra media release: 'A new era of telecommunications – Telstra lights up 4G mobile services in Australia', 27 September 2011, <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/media-centre/announcements/telstra-lights-up-4g-mobile-services-in-australia.xml>

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**Contents**

<b>01</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>Telstra's commitment to regional and rural customers</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>Advancements in technology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>Community engagement</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>Opportunities under the NBN</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Local Presence Plan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Specific responses to the discussion paper</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>THE DIGITAL ECONOMY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>How the use of telecommunications services, and information and communication technology (ICT) evolving in different industry sectors and the impact of these changes in regional Australia</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Extending and accelerating the role of telecommunications services and ICT in delivering benefits to regional economies</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Participation in, experiences of, and expectations about, the digital economy</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Views and experiences about engaging with government online, whether local, state or federal</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Encouraging greater participation in the digital economy from people living and working in regional Australia</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Opinion on barriers to regional communities increasing their use of information and communications technologies and do you have any ideas for a way forward</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>REGIONAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>How high-speed broadband can enhance the delivery of education and healthcare outcomes in regional communities</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Participation, experience and expectations of online health and education service delivery</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Indigenous Australians using the internet to take advantage of economic, social or cultural opportunities</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Further initiatives to consider to improve awareness within indigenous communities of the opportunities provided by the NBN</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Recommendations for remote communities to take advantage of the progressive increase in availability of high-speed broadband</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Recommendations to improve digital literacy amongst Indigenous Australians and within Indigenous communities</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TERRESTRIAL AND SATELLITE MOBILE PHONE SECTOR</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Information to improve mobile phone coverage, such as using an external antenna or choosing particular phones that are better suited to rural and remote coverage</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Emerging technologies or initiatives to improve mobile phone coverage in regional Australia</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>15.</b>	<b>Telstra's experience with satellite mobile phones</b>	<b>19</b>

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<b>CONSUMER ISSUES</b>	<b>20</b>
16. Addressing consumer issues specific to rural and remote communities	20
17. Access to information and service options for those in regional areas, particularly those in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups	20
18. Possible additional strategies to assist individuals and groups to better understand their consumer rights and responsibilities	21
19. Specific cyber safety challenges in regional, rural or remote communities	21
20. Education and awareness of the risks of using mobile devices, such as smartphones, be improved for consumers in regional areas	22
Appendix 1: My Offer Summary	23

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## 01 Introduction

Telstra welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review (RTR). Telstra has actively engaged with the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) during the consultation period discussing Telstra's long standing commitment to regional and rural customers and communities, Telstra's continued investment in information and communications technology (ICT) services, dedication to improving telecommunications for Indigenous Australians as well as community safety initiatives. In addition, our local Telstra Country Wide (TCW) team members have participated in many of the public meetings held by the Committee across regional and rural Australia. Telstra Executives would be happy to meet with the Committee further if that would be of assistance. Telstra's commitment to regional and rural Australia is long standing and Telstra remains dedicated to serving the needs of these customers.

Telstra is the major provider of telecommunications services across Australia, particularly in the higher cost regional and rural areas where it is less economical to build and operate telecommunications services. Telstra, for many years, has been the primary provider servicing these customers.

As discussed in the consultation paper, the Federal Government has committed to the roll out of the National Broadband Network (NBN), introducing high-speed broadband to 93% of the population. The broadband needs of all remaining premises will be served by a combination of next-generation fixed-wireless and satellite technologies. While Telstra has been offering high-speed broadband services for many years, the NBN presents a unique opportunity for Australian consumers. Telstra intends to participate in the NBN.

## 02 Telstra's commitment to regional and rural customers

Telstra continues to maintain a strong local presence in regional, rural and remote Australia with local sales and service employees from a range of Telstra business units. These employees generally live and work in the communities they serve. Telstra Country Wide sits within the expanded Telstra Consumer and Country Wide (TCCW) business unit, which has overarching accountability and responsibility for serving customers in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

Telstra continues to have a strong retail presence in Australia with customers able to visit more than 700 Telstra owned shops, Telstra licensed stores, Telstra partner stores and dealers across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia.

Telstra Country Wide Area General Managers are the most senior representative in the local market, responsible for matters affecting customers in their area.

## 03 Advancements in technology

Since the last RTIRC review, Telstra has actively invested in technology improvements that aim to improve the experience of our regional and rural customers.

Measure	2008	2011	Improvement
Mobile Coverage- Next G®	6,400 sites 2.0m sq km (99% of pop)	7,500 sites 2.1m sq km (99% of pop)	Additional 1,100 sites Additional 0.1m sq km coverage with infill coverage greatly improved
Mobile SIOs (Telstra Retail)	9.335M SIOs	12.223M SIOs	2.888M SIOs
Wireless Data Speed <b>3G</b> (Next G®) <i>Typical Download speeds</i> <i>Typical Upload speeds</i>	550kbps – 3Mbps 300kbps – 1Mbps	1.1Mbps – 20Mbps 300kbps – 3Mps	550kbps – 17Mbps No change – 2Mps
Wireless Data Speed <b>4G</b> <i>Typical Download speeds</i> <i>Typical Upload speeds</i>	n/a n/a	2Mbps - 40Mbps 1Mbps - 10Mbps	2Mbps - 40Mbps 1Mbps - 10Mbps
Mobile Broadband SIOs (Data Cards) (Telstra)	526,000 SIOs	2.576 M SIOs	2.05 M SIOs
ADSL 1 Coverage ADSL 2+ Coverage	93.2% Pop. 82.1% Pop.	93.2% Pop. 84.2% Pop.	No change 2.1% Pop (equates to approximately 480,000 people)  Since June 2008, 711 exchanges have been upgraded to ADSL 2+.
Fixed Retail Broadband SIOs (Telstra)	2.254M SIOs	2.413M SIOs	159,000 SIOs

Source: Telstra

Telstra continues to invest in infrastructure in regional and rural areas, creating greater opportunities for customers who live in these areas. For example:

#### **Launch of 4G services on Telstra Network**

In September 2011, Telstra began offering commercial 4G services on the Next G® network. The launch of Long Term Evolution (LTE) 4G mobile broadband services on the Telstra Next G® network in selected regions means Australians in these regions have access to one of the world's most advanced mobile networks delivering some of the fastest download and upload speeds available anywhere.

By the end of December 2011, we anticipate that the Telstra 4G service will be available in approximately 80 regional locations.

#### **Installation of 'TopHats' enable additional ADSL2+ services**

In October 2011, Telstra announced that it was upgrading more than 2000 street side cabinets to include ADSL2+ equipment. This project means that customers who are connected through the street side cabinets will now be able to connect to ADSL2+ whereas previously they did not have high-speed broadband access, or only an ADSL service. In addition, Telstra is also upgrading backhaul to support

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the ADSL 2+ services. This upgrade is expected to occur over an 18 month time frame. Further details on the roll out schedule are available at: <http://exchange.telstra.com.au/?p=15830>.

### ***Birdsville's permanent 3G service***

Birdsville is an iconic outback town in Queensland. Its annual racing carnival is so popular that the town's population swells from its usual 120 residents to more than 6,000 for the event.

In August 2010 Telstra announced that Birdsville had received its first permanent 3G mobile service. It is the first service of its kind as it uses satellite-fed 3G technology instead of the terrestrial network. The service provides coverage to the town and surrounding areas, extending outwards to a radius of around 20 to 30 kilometres. The new base station was a joint effort with Telstra supplying the satellite technology and our network partner Ericsson donating the base station equipment.

### ***Telstra's backhaul investment in regional areas***

Increasing backhaul capacity provides greater available bandwidth resulting in greater speed and less congestion allowing more users to use the specific service. Overall, this provides an improved customer experience.

Over the past three years, Telstra has invested around \$264 million to provide additional backhaul capacity to regional areas. These programs have included transmission diversity and cable replacement in regional exchanges, and provision of connectivity for major regional commercial customers. Telstra plans to continue this investment in FY12. This continued investment is part of Telstra's commitment to serving regional customers and is not a result of any Government-funded program.

### ***Arnhem Land fibre project***

On 2 December 2009, Telstra announced the completion of one of the largest optic fibre and broadband infrastructure projects undertaken in Australia in recent times – the Arnhem Land Fibre Project. Nine Indigenous communities and the township of Nhulunbuy are now connected to Telstra's fibre optic backbone.

The project provided high-speed broadband and other services equivalent to those in our largest cities to some of Australia's most remote communities. Over 940km of fibre optic cable was laid across fragile terrain, in difficult climatic conditions between Jabiru and Nhulunbuy. It has connected around 10,000 people living in some of the most remote parts of Australia to high-speed broadband and a range of other advanced communications services, at a cost of around \$34 million.

Traditional owner Joe Yunupingu said that Telstra's interaction with the community on the project "was actually the best ever any white people has done on Aboriginal land."<sup>2</sup>

### ***Groote Eylandt project***

The Groote Eylandt project involved the installation of 96km of optic fibre between Numbulwar and Alyangula, on Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory. The majority of the cable (93km) is a submarine cable with the remaining 3.4km being terrestrial fibre that extends the submarine cable to Telstra's existing network.

This project required consultation with the Northern Territory Government and Traditional owners. An Environmental Management Plan was developed to avoid and reduce impacts on threatened species. The fibre solution meets the needs of a number of communities and businesses for telecommunication services including telephony, mobile and broadband services.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: 'Traditional owner pleased with consultation', 10 December 2008, [http://wn.com/TelstraTraditional\\_owner\\_pleased\\_with\\_consultation](http://wn.com/TelstraTraditional_owner_pleased_with_consultation)

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## 04 Community engagement

Telstra actively engages with the communities in which we operate. Telstra has an active community engagement program that sees our local Telstra Country Wide employees participate in key community forums such as local Chambers of Commerce, local government and other representative bodies.

Telstra Country Wide regularly conducts town by town visits and town hall meetings to discuss key local telecommunications plans and issues. This could be around mobile coverage and new mobile towers, broadband infrastructure or other pressing matters for the community.

Telstra's local sponsorship and grant programs are designed to help enrich local communities and 'give back' where possible.

## 05 Opportunities under the NBN

The NBN will deliver fixed broadband services to 93% of the population, with the remainder of the population to be served by satellite and wireless broadband. In June 2011, Telstra signed Definitive Agreements with NBN Co and the Commonwealth Government, outlining Telstra's participation in the roll out of the NBN. These agreements remain subject to the achievement of several conditions precedent, including acceptance by the ACCC of Telstra's Structural Separation Undertaking (SSU).

As part of this agreement, Telstra has agreed to disconnect, progressively, copper-based Customer Access Network services and broadband services on its HFC cable network (but not Pay TV services on the HFC) that are provided to premises in the NBN fibre footprint, and will migrate services onto NBN-based services, over the expected 10 year build period of the NBN.

As part of the NBN, the Government has committed to reforms of the USO program. Telstra has entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth, providing that while these premises remain connected to Telstra's copper network, Telstra has agreed to continue to operate and maintain the existing copper lines (subject to some exceptions). Once an area is disconnected from the copper exchange as part of the NBN migration process, Telstra has agreed that it will be the provider of last resort and continue to supply STSs (Standard Telephone Services) to end users over the NBN where requested by the end user. This agreement gives regional and rural customers certainty that Telstra will continue to serve them as they transition to the NBN.

For the remaining 7% of Australian premises, Telstra's contract with the Commonwealth requires Telstra to operate and maintain its existing copper network and other infrastructure in non-fibre areas (subject to certain exceptions). Telstra has agreed to continue to provide a STS using the copper network for any consumer who wishes to continue with the service and to ensure that the copper network is sufficiently maintained. Telstra also expects to continue to use the copper network outside the NBN fibre footprint to provide broadband services where practicable. The USO legislative package was introduced in Federal Parliament in early November 2011, and is yet to be enacted.

## 06 Local Presence Plan

Telstra's commitment to the advancement of regional and rural customers is discussed further in Telstra's Local Presence Plan. For further information, see <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/regional-rural-presence-plan/>

## 07 Specific responses to the discussion paper

In the following pages, we address each of the specific questions in the Issues Paper, drawing from our own experience in offering high-speed broadband services nationwide.

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## THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

### 1. How the use of telecommunications services, and information and communication technology (ICT) is evolving in different industry sectors and the impact of these changes in regional Australia

Telstra has actively partnered with many of our Business, Enterprise and Government customers, across a range of industry sectors helping them to realise a range of benefits such as significant cost savings, productivity improvements and a range of other benefits through the use of telecommunications services and ICT in regional areas. For example:

- **Fire safety** – Telstra has partnered with EYEfi (spatial video service provider) to trial cameras and environmental monitoring equipment across key regional locations to provide advanced fire watch technology. The cameras use Telstra's Next G® network to provide visibility of fire threats from new vantage points throughout our national and state forests. The cameras and the network then communicate critical information about a fire's whereabouts, as well as environmental, micro-climate and bio-diversity data directly to users.
- **Agriculture** – Telstra works with vineyards in many regional areas to assist with water irrigation technologies via telecommunications services. In many areas, it is difficult to control the appropriate amount of water to maintain large vineyard development and growth. For example, Food and Beverage Australia Ltd (FABAL) built pipelines across their vineyards to link pumping stations. These pumping stations control water flow to the vineyards and are managed using Telstra's Next G® network. Alarms, switching pumps on and off and managing water flow remotely are all vital parts of the management. The Barossa Council in South Australia also uses water-based telemetry to help them manage their domestic waste. Covering 8000sq km, six major towns and nine satellite towns, the Next G® network is used to access six major networks with pump stations that are then monitored at a central location. Consequently, they can quickly fix or address issues when there are breakdowns. The Barossa Council uses the system to recycle 85% of their waste water to then be used by local grape growers.
- **Health (mobile)** – In 2009, Telstra and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Services teamed up to launch wireless technology that has been dubbed the doctor's house call of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nurses use Telstra's Next G® mobile handsets to link doctors and specialists with patients that are unable to get to a hospital. The handset allows real-time video streaming with multiple GPs or medical experts. The technology was successfully trialed in the Central Highlands and Derwent Valley, with the aim to bring the technology to the rest of Tasmania in the future.
- **Health (hospital-based)** – The Loddon Mallee Rural Health Alliance, in partnership with Telstra, runs the Virtual Trauma and Critical Care Unit Project. The Virtual Trauma units are used across the Loddon Mallee region of Victoria where, like in many parts of rural Australia, it can be difficult to access specialist medical services, particularly in the areas of pediatrics, surgery and trauma care. The Virtual Trauma units comprise of mobile wireless high definition video cameras and monitors, which are all linked to the Telstra Next IP™ network. Specialists in Melbourne can be an integral part of patient stabilisation and the treatment process in real time. Specialists can control the high definition camera, join a conference with a patient and staff, review scans and test results as well as watch live endoscopic video feeds. This helps Victorian hospitals provide the best quality care for patients and minimises distress for families and friends. The technology allows for easy access to specialist support and helps avoid unnecessary and costly transfers from regional hospitals.

More examples across various industries can be found at <http://www.telstraenterprise.com/researchinsights/casestudies/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>

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## 2. Extending and accelerating the role of telecommunications services and ICT in delivering benefits to regional economies

In order to extend and accelerate the benefits delivered by telecommunications services and ICT in regional economies, Telstra has established local partnerships with community groups, chambers of commerce, locally based corporations (i.e., independent financing companies) or the Government (i.e., local councils) who contribute either cash or value in kind to assist with building the required telecommunications infrastructure. Telstra considers many factors when determining where to invest infrastructure that would benefit the local community. At times, it is not commercially viable for Telstra to invest in infrastructure as there is a low or negative return on investment. In these instances, Telstra works with the local communities that have expressed a desire for additional infrastructure to determine what partnerships can be established to provide financial assistance. Telstra encourages these partnerships where it is beneficial to all parties.

Examples of Telstra partnering with the community and/or government to provide additional infrastructure include:

- Yetman, NSW: In 2008, the community built the tower, power and the access road required for mobile network infrastructure
- Gibraltar Spur, VIC: Wellington Shire contributed to the cost of providing primary power for the telecommunications infrastructure site
- Parkers Corner, VIC: Baw Baw Shire contributed to the telecommunications infrastructure site build
- Rosebery, TAS: On a mining site, the owning mining corporation contributed wholly to the telecommunications infrastructure build. This site covers the Rosebery township as well as the mine site.
- Quongup, Balingup, Kukerin and Nullagine Town, WA: Telecommunications infrastructure has been funded by government and private industry to address community requirements.

In addition to the specific examples above Telstra has participated in Federal Government funding initiatives, namely the Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) where public funds were provided to facilitate the build of infrastructure in areas that are commercially unviable for coverage provision.

Telstra has also participated in State Government tenders focused on telecommunications infrastructure. For example, the WA Government announced it would fund the Royalties for Regions funded Regional Mobile Communication Program (RMCP) to develop communications infrastructure in regional WA, with a particular focus on improved emergency services communications. To this end, it announced an allocation of \$39.2m in the 2010-11 WA State Budget with potential allocations totalling a further \$80m over the subsequent two years. In March 2011, the WA Government called for tenders for this project and Telstra submitted what we believed to be a compelling bid which would significantly increase our coverage footprint for both mobile voice and wireless broadband services within Western Australia. If successful, this will enhance voice and data services to highway users and targeted regional and rural areas and generate significant economic benefits for the State. It will also improve emergency services communications for both government and non-government organisations as well as the delivery of health and education services to remote Indigenous communities and regional Western Australia. The resulting footprint would provide near-continuous highway coverage from Eucla in the east to Kununurra in the north at the completion of the three phases. The State Government is expected to make an announcement soon concerning the preferred proponent for this project.

The Federal Government should consider offering further subsidies/rebates which may also accelerate investment/take up. As the Government has alluded to in its National Digital Economy Strategy paper, further subsidies/rebates in the necessary applications will further increase use. For example, the recently announced Medicare Rebates for consultations undertaken by video conferencing will help encourage the use by individuals and investment by businesses in providing this technology.

### 3. Participation in, experiences of, and expectations about, the digital economy

Telstra has detailed case studies, some of which are referenced in Question 1 exploring how businesses and organisations are making use of the Digital Economy to improve their business productivity, explore new opportunities and reduce costs.

These case studies can be found at

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/researchinsights/casestudies/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>

The Telstra Productivity Indicator also showcases attitudes of businesses towards productivity. This annual publication is available at:

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/Brochures/TPI2011.pdf>

### 4. Views and experiences about engaging with government online, whether local, state or federal

Drawing from our own experience serving our government customers, high-speed broadband has helped many government bodies realise benefits, including:

- **Swan Hill Rural City Council** implemented video conferencing facilities into their offices that helped connect disparate rural sites over 6000km apart. This cut travel time, reduced operating costs, improved data connections, provided a better quality of service, allowed remote working and improved receipting times.
- **Hinchinbrook Shire Council** use high-speed broadband to connect multiple work sites across a wide geographical area and also provide for flexible working arrangements. This has delivered improved productivity, lower costs and improved services to customers as staff are on call 24 x 7.

Other examples are available at

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/researchinsights/casestudies/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>

### 5. Encouraging greater participation in the digital economy from people living and working in regional Australia

In order to encourage participation in the Digital Economy, below are some examples of activities Telstra undertakes:

- **Telstra's Indigenous Directorate** – established in 2005 to coordinate improvements to telecommunications services for remote Indigenous communities across Australia. The Directorate has the following accountabilities:
  - Championing the availability of culturally appropriate products and services for Indigenous people living in remote communities;
  - Supporting the rollout of new infrastructure and services to remote Indigenous communities, with support of government agencies where investment would otherwise be uneconomic;
  - Representing Telstra to governments and stakeholder groups in the delivery of appropriate telecommunications infrastructure and services to Indigenous people;
  - Working across Telstra to support the attraction and development of Indigenous employees;
  - Supporting Telstra's sponsorship and community investment partnerships which benefit Indigenous people and their endeavours; and
  - Providing advice to ensure consistency across Telstra with policy and processes in Indigenous affairs.

During 2010/11, Telstra's National Indigenous Directorate was actively involved in:

- Delivering broadband to 15 remote island communities in the Torres Strait;

- Supporting the Frequent Attenders Program to reward students in the Northern Territory who attend school regularly, and
- Launching Telstra's Reconciliation Action Plan.
- **Telstra Connected Seniors Program®** - this program is tailored to help older Australians learn more about how to use telecommunications services. It offers individual self teach guides, fun interactive workshops, and also offers eligible community groups with the opportunity of funding to run successful training courses on the use of mobile phones and the internet. The program is structured to reach out to local community organisations nationally to enable the delivery of high quality, local training to seniors.

In 2010/11, the program:

- Provided 53 Telstra Connected Seniors® grants totalling approximately \$450,000
- Trained more than 62,000 older Australians through face-to-face training and self teach DVDs loaned through libraries across Australia
- Hosted 33 large-scale, local training events across Australia working closely with the local Telstra Country Wide teams.
- **Telstra Foundation's Community Development Fund** – this Fund supports community-based projects that connect children and young people to their communities. It is their connections to parents, family, friends and community that helps our young people gain resilience and self-respect. The opportunity to reach their potential, enrich social links, build a sense of belonging and have access to basic entitlements is critical to the health and well-being of young Australians. Priority is given to projects that support kids who experience social or geographical isolation. Priority is also given to projects that make use of information and communication technologies to address identified needs and connect kids to their communities. By having a focus on new technologies, Telstra can add more than monetary support to recipients' projects. We can also call on the knowledge and expertise of Telstra's entire workforce.
- **Telstra Access for Anyone** – Telstra actively works to improve the accessibility and affordability of our services. The Access for Everyone Programs are one of the ways Telstra supports access to telecommunications for those in our communities who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. We consult quarterly with the Low Income Measures Assessment Committee (LIMAC) comprising representatives from peak Community Groups including Jobs Australia, Homelessness Australia, The Salvation Army, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul, The Smith Family and Council of the Ageing.

Telstra partners with more than 2000 Community Agencies nationally to deliver the Access for Everyone programs addressing the telecommunications needs of people on a low income and those facing financial hardship or disadvantage.

- **Uniform pricing across residential services** – Telstra maintains national pricing for all residential services, regardless of location. Many of Telstra's competitors either refuse to service particular customer segments or charge differentially for regional areas.
- **Local engagement with regional and rural customers** – Telstra undertakes regular surveys and research into the needs and views of its customers throughout Australia, particularly in relation to the development of new products and services, and service performance. Telstra AGMs regularly speak to customers, customer representative groups and community organisations in the course of their day to day duties. Telstra also regularly consults with customers via regional visits from senior Telstra executives.

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- **Partnerships with local agencies** – Telstra also maintains close links with key organisations and stakeholders, including:
    - Farming organisations;
    - The Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association (ICPA) and state chapters;
    - Local government across Australia;
    - Regional Development Boards;
    - Local MPs (Federal and State) and
    - Disability groups.

Telstra also regularly has a presence at events in regional areas (i.e., field days) to discuss telecommunications services, planning and any issues customers may be experiencing. This is in addition to dedicated marketing campaigns run for Telstra’s regional customers so they are aware of the products and services available to assist with their telecommunications needs.

#### **6. Opinion on barriers to regional communities increasing their use of information and communications technologies and do you have any ideas for a way forward**

As outlined in Q5, Telstra has many programs in place that assist in breaking down barriers that may be limiting use of information and communications technology. Many of Telstra’s programs are targeted at the older demographic (Connected Seniors®), Indigenous Australians (Indigenous Directorate) and young children (Telstra’s Kids Fund). Our programs enable people to learn how to engage with technology and provide new opportunities for enrichment in the community.

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## REGIONAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES

### 7. How high-speed broadband can enhance the delivery of education and healthcare outcomes in regional communities

Telstra has actively partnered with many of our customers to enhance the delivery of education and healthcare outcomes in regional communities via high-speed broadband services.

#### *Healthcare in regional communities*

- **Tristar Medical Group** – Through cloud computing technology, Tristar Medical Group has been able to rapidly expand clinics across New South Wales and Victoria and achieve their aim of delivering the same medical services to rural Australia as that enjoyed by metro patients. With this technology, doctors and staff are able to access all medical records and management systems no matter which clinic they are in, at any one time.
- **Lyell McEwin Health Services** – Telstra worked with LHMS and the SA Government to deliver a patient bedside system that will help provide superior patient entertainment and clinical information, with scope for further innovations. This is the largest deployment of its kind in Australia and one of the largest anywhere in the world.

This was a pilot project and the catalyst for a broader and more visionary state-wide project. The systems will provide patients with the ability to access a range of entertainment options and will allow clinicians to enter and view vital patient information at the point of care. The solution can also be used to allow patients to connect with specialist medical resources via video conference where the specialist is located. It also provides an important visual link between patients and their families when family members are not able to visit in person. In summary, the solution provides:

- Secure clinical access
  - Access to health education and wellness information
  - Meal ordering
  - Television
  - Pay TV
  - Movies on Demand
  - Telephone
  - Video Conference
  - Internet
- **Loddon Mallee Health Alliance** – As mentioned previously, a tailored Telstra MWAN solution helps LMHA's Virtual Trauma & Critical Care Unit enable trauma specialists at metropolitan hospitals to work in real-time with Emergency Department teams at their hospitals in country Victoria, realising savings of at least \$500,000 per annum
  - **BreastScreen Victoria** – Using digital mammography, BreastScreen Victoria is able to provide a faster and more streamlined service to its clients utilising the Next G<sup>®</sup> network.
  - **Tasmania's Remote Video Collaboration** – As mentioned previously, Telstra teamed with Tasmania's Department of Health and Human Services to launch remote video collaboration. Nurses use Telstra's Next G<sup>®</sup> mobile handsets to link specialists and doctors with patients unable to get to hospital.

Further information regarding health solutions can be found at:

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/researchinsights/casestudies/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>  
<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/industries/Pages/Healthcare.aspx>

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### **Education in regional communities**

- **Catholic Network Australia** – Through the deployment of a new high-speed broadband fibre network to more than 1550 schools across Australia, CNA has been able to foster student engagement and collaboration, enhance teaching, and help Catholic education harness the power of the digital classroom.
- **Gippsland Education** – Gippsland Education utilises the Telstra Next G® network and Polycom Video Conferencing to help deliver trade training to students in rural Victoria who might otherwise not be able to receive it
- **NSW Government Schools** – High-speed broadband has been rolled out to 2400 government schools and TAFE colleges across NSW enabling students in NSW including those in rural and regional schools to be connected to the world and able to link up with experts from universities and other classrooms in NSW and overseas. Telstra rolled out more than 4,500 kilometres of optic fibre to more than 2,400 sites, with the investment creating around 150 jobs.

Further information regarding education solutions can be found at:

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/researchinsights/casestudies/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>

<http://www.telstraenterprise.com/productsservices/advancedindustrysolutions/Pages/EducationSolutions.aspx>

### **8. Participation, experience and expectations of online health and education service delivery**

As discussed above, our customers have spoken of the following benefits of, online health and education service delivery:

- Greater reach of customers with technology breaking down the distance barrier
- Better patient care
- Reduced costs
- Improved service for clients
- Improved productivity of staff
- Increased accuracy
- Enabler for further innovations

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## COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

### 9. Indigenous Australians using the internet to take advantage of economic, social or cultural opportunities

As a national carrier and long-term partner to regional Australia, Telstra understands the vital role that telecommunications play in achieving educational, health and economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

We seek to better know our Indigenous customers and continue to offer products and services to address the distinct challenges faced by Indigenous communities, especially those in remote locations.

Telstra invests in communities with our technology, financial support, products and services as well as the time and skills of our people. We work in partnership with Government, business and non-profit organisations to support projects that celebrate and sustain Indigenous culture.

In working with local communities Telstra commits to a model of self-determination and control where our expertise helps build on the strengths of the communities that we support.

For our customers, we aim to provide affordable, innovative and accessible products and services which improve the lives of our Indigenous customers. In a similar way, we wish to use our information and communication technologies to invest in, support and create opportunities for Indigenous communities.

The internet helps many communities connect on social, economic and personal levels. This is particularly the case for Indigenous Australians, where many communities are realising the benefits that advanced telecommunications can make for them.

At Telstra, we have witnessed, and assisted, the internet being used by Indigenous Australians in a variety of enriching ways. For example:

- Indigenous artists working with businesses and Indigenous Art Centres in Indigenous communities to sell their artwork online and return profits to the community as well as the artists;
- Organisations located in Indigenous communities are able to employ local Indigenous people to work in the business, while living and contributing to their community. This is made possible through broadband infrastructure (fixed and wireless) to the community;
- Where broadband is available (fixed/ wireless) social media sites, such as Facebook, are popular for members in the Indigenous community, enhancing their level of connectedness and inclusiveness.

Telstra recently sponsored the 5th Indigenous Economic Development (IED) Forum in Darwin. The event focused on ways to build, support and strengthen Indigenous business partnerships. As part of the Forum, an Indigenous Business Expo provided Indigenous businesses with an opportunity to showcase their products and services to a targeted business and investor audience. As the silver sponsor, Telstra and Yellow Pages presented a session on how Indigenous businesses could employ digital marketing solutions to help their business succeed.

### 10. Further initiatives to consider to improve awareness within indigenous communities of the opportunities provided by the NBN

Telstra recommends the Committee consider improving awareness of the opportunities and benefits of the NBN through the Indigenous Land Councils. Telstra has a program that funds a full time position in the Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council in the Northern Territory (NT). The "Telstra Officers" arrangement provides a mutual benefit for Telstra and the Land Councils through managing consultations with traditional owners, clearances for network upgrades, site clearances and permit

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applications. These positions could also be utilised to help implement education programs to engage Indigenous communities and provide them with vital information around the opportunities presented through broadband.

### **11. Recommendations for remote communities to take advantage of the progressive increase in availability of high-speed broadband**

Based on Telstra's experience, we recommend that the Committee consider:

- Education and awareness campaigns focused on the benefits of high-speed broadband, based on the experiences in remote Indigenous communities that now have access to this technology (e.g., Arnhem Land);
- Traineeships for Indigenous people to provide basic information and communication technology skills and;
- Supported community internet centres (in our experience, usage and confidence with the internet has been where there are central hubs in remote communities with good technical support available)

### **12. Recommendations to improve digital literacy amongst Indigenous Australians and within Indigenous communities**

Telstra launched the Frequent Attender program at Hermannsburg in partnership with the Northern Territory's Education Minister in April 2011. This program provides BigPond Music cards as a reward for young Indigenous Australians attending school on a regular basis. The pilot covers five schools in some of the Northern Territory's most remote communities. As a result of the success of this program, McArthur River Mines have implemented an incentive program at Borroloola in the NT.

Telstra is also a major partner of One Laptop Per Child Australia that provides laptops to Indigenous children living in remote communities – laptops that will help remove barriers to education by linking them to the wider world, and helping them reach for a better future. Telstra is now looking at a pilot that will extend 'safe' internet coverage from the schoolyard to within the community boundaries. This will extend the digital learning platform beyond the traditional classroom.

Extending programs such as these will assist a greater number of Indigenous Australians to improve their digital literacy.

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## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TERRESTRIAL AND SATELLITE MOBILE PHONE SECTOR

### 13. Information to improve mobile phone coverage, such as using an external antenna or choosing particular phones that are better suited to rural and remote coverage

Telstra has readily accessible information on how to help improve mobile phone coverage for customers listed on our website. This can be found at <http://telstra.com.au/mobile/phones/> and <http://telstra.com.au/mobile/networks/coverage/>. This website provides information on:

- Appropriate handsets for regional and rural customers (identified by the Blue Tick symbol).- Telstra stock many devices such as BlackBerry Torch, Motorola Defy, Motorola Atrix with the Blue Tick rating. The Blue Tick means that these phones work better (when compared with others without the Blue Tick) when they are a long distance from the base station, making them better suited to regional areas;
- Directly coupled car kits;
- External antennas;
- Patch leads (cost effective alternatives to external antennas);
- Detailed Next G® coverage maps, and
- Next G® videos, showing how to use antennas to maximise Next G® coverage when out at sea, camping or caravanning.

Telstra customers are also able to obtain advice from Telstra consultants if they:

- Call – telephone Telstra’s consultants to receive advice on what products and services are available to assist in improving mobile phone coverage in regional and rural areas. Telstra call centres are available 24x7;
- Click – view information on Telstra’s website, or communicate with Telstra representatives via Facebook, Twitter or Telstra’s blog ‘Telstra Exchange’ and;
- Come in – visit any of the 700 Telstra stores, partners or dealers nationwide to discuss the options available to help improve mobile phone coverage.

### 14. Emerging technologies or initiatives to improve mobile phone coverage in regional Australia

Currently, Telstra’s Next G® network is the most superior mobile network in Australia, twice as large as any other 3G network in the country. It covers over 99% of the Australian population and provides better coverage in more buildings, lifts and car parks than any other Australian 3G mobile network, so customers can connect in more places.

In September 2011, Telstra began offering commercial 4G services on the Next G® network. The launch of Long Term Evolution (LTE) 4G mobile broadband services on the Telstra Next G® network in selected regions means Australians in these regions have access to one of the world's most advanced mobile networks delivering some of the fastest download and upload speeds available on a wireless broadband network.

Telstra sells dual mode LTE/HSPA+ mobile broadband devices that will operate seamlessly across 1800MHz and 850MHz spectrum bands, giving Telstra Next G® network customers the benefits of 4G where it is available and then seamless switchover to the 3GHSPA technology in other areas.

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These speeds mean customers will be able to download songs faster, and do more things simultaneously. This is just the beginning. Telstra 4G will help enable our mobile devices to perform even more advanced tasks and will help open the door to a host of innovative high-speed services that have yet to be conceived.

Customers using a USB 4G mobile broadband device in 4G coverage areas can enjoy typical download speeds ranging from 2Mbps to 40Mbps – up to twice as fast as our fastest existing 3G device (the Ultimate USB®). Customers can also experience typical upload speeds of 1Mbps to 10Mbps in 4G coverage areas, which is up to 3 times faster than our 3G Ultimate USB® device today.

As well as supporting faster mobile speeds, Telstra 4G provides a more responsive internet connection. Network latency (the time it takes for data to travel from a PC to the internet and back) is around half that experienced on current 3G networks meaning real-time applications like video conferencing, internet gaming and cloud-hosted streaming services work better with less buffering and fewer interruptions.

By the end of December 2011, we anticipate that Telstra 4G will be available in approximately 80 regional locations.

Further, customers can also provide feedback on mobile coverage at <https://www.telstra.com.au/mobile/networks/feedback.cfm>. This information assists our mobile technicians and engineers to drive constant improvements to Telstra's mobile networks.

## 15. Telstra's experience with satellite mobile phones

Telstra Mobile Satellite is a mobile phone solution which uses unique Iridium™ Satellite technology to deliver a portable voice and data phone service in the remotest locations around Australia.

Telstra offers a range of satellite mobile phones, with information available at: [https://www.telstra.com.au/mobile/networks/network\\_info/satellite.cfm](https://www.telstra.com.au/mobile/networks/network_info/satellite.cfm)

Telstra offers customers the choice of six plans (five individual and one group plan) allowing customers to tailor their plan according to their own circumstances. Telstra's plans for satellite phones come with Mobile Repayment Options, enabling customers to spread the cost of the handset over the life of the contract. Calling value is included across all of Telstra's specific satellite plans.

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## CONSUMER ISSUES

### 16. Addressing consumer issues specific to rural and remote communities

Telstra Country Wide was established in 2000 and became the local face of Telstra – charged with understanding and meeting the needs of Australians living outside metropolitan areas and delivering the best in telecommunications for regional and rural customers. The local management model now extends to all areas of Australia and provides an extensive national field coverage model comprising all consumer retail points of presence, local community leaders and support teams.

We work closely with the communities in which we operate to ensure that we are addressing consumer issues.

We welcome feedback in a variety of formats – through our Area General Manager offices, through our retail stores, over the phone, or online.

### 17. Access to information and service options for those in regional areas, particularly those in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups

As indicated in Telstra's Local Presence Plan, we understand that among our regional, rural and remote customers there are groups who have particular needs. Telstra has in place several programs that offer tailored products and services to help meet specific needs and circumstances, especially to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

Telstra will continue to offer tailored products and services for its regional, rural and remote customers with particular communication needs, including older customers, those with a disability or on low incomes, and people living in remote Indigenous communities. Telstra also has specific contact numbers should customers prefer to speak to a Telstra Customer Service Representative in a language other than English. The products and services offered may change over time.

For example:

- Priority Assistance at <http://www.telstra.com.au/help/docs/priority-assist-policy.pdf>
- Disability Catalogue at <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/disability-services/disability-products-services/>
- Access For Everyone – Affordability Options at <http://telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/access-for-everyone/?red=/abouttelstra/commitments/accessforeveryone/index.cfm>
- Various disability initiatives including:
  - Disability Action Plan: <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/disability-services/action-plan-history/>
  - Consultation and community: <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/disability-services/community-initiatives/>
- Remote Indigenous Communities at <http://telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/access-for-everyone/?red=/abouttelstra/commitments/accessforeveryone/index.cfm>
- Services for Indigenous Communities: <http://telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/access-for-everyone/>
- Language Assistance - Telstra's Multicultural Call Centre speaks your language at: <http://telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/accessforeveryone/index.cfm>

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Telstra has also implemented two recent initiatives to ensure that prospective customers (including Indigenous Australians) are aware of the terms of an offer. These include:

- Development of a 'My Offer Summary' – The key terms of the new service, whether it be a mobile, broadband, or fixed line service, are clearly explained in a single page plain English summary that is handed to the customer at point of sale or sent to the customer after an agreement over the phone. We have 129 versions of these to cover most popular plans (see Appendix 1 for example).
- Staff are trained to be able to recognise and deal with customers who, when dealing with them in person, perceive they are not fluent in English. In these cases, the customer will be shown the application form and instructed to return with a person who will be able to translate the terms and conditions for the customer. Telstra Staff have been instructed not to sell to customers unless they are sure that the customer understands their commitments. In the past, Telstra has disciplined telemarketers who have not upheld this standard.

#### **18. Possible additional strategies to assist individuals and groups to better understand their consumer rights and responsibilities**

Telstra has extensive information to assist individuals and groups to better understand their consumer rights and responsibilities on Telstra's website, under <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/>. In addition, customers can make free phone calls to Telstra service numbers, as required.

Further, as indicated in Telstra's ACCAN mid-term DBCDE review submission, lodged in October 2011, we recommended ACCAN upgrade the 'Consumer Info' section of its website to include market-based reviews of communications products and services of benefit to members and their constituencies.

As a recommendation to previous RTIRC reviews, we note that the Department has also prepared brochures on consumer rights and responsibilities which may be beneficial to customers. This is available at [http://www.dbcde.gov.au/Article/0,,0\\_7-2\\_4011-4\\_118670,00.html](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/Article/0,,0_7-2_4011-4_118670,00.html).

#### **19. Specific cyber safety challenges in regional, rural or remote communities**

Fast internet connectivity, mobile and other convergent devices are changing the way Australians communicate, transact and organise their lives. Advances in technology and higher bandwidth internet connections have increased people's ability to connect with each other, driven improvements in productivity, social inclusion, enhanced innovation and changed the way we communicate.

However, this fast-changing environment presents new risks, which is why cyber-safety is important to all Australians no matter how old they are or where they live. Internet users in regional, rural and remote communities are no more or less exposed to online risks than users in metropolitan areas.

Cyber-safety for all internet users is about knowing that online risks exist and understanding the things you can do to have a safer online experience. It's about building an individual's confidence (regardless of their age and online experience level) and encouraging behaviour similar to social standards offline in an online environment – that way they know how to control their own online risks when using and embracing technology to connect with other people.

Telstra provides information regarding cyber safety on its website at <http://www.telstra.com.au/cyber-safety>.

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## 20. Education and awareness of the risks of using mobile devices, such as smartphones, be improved for consumers in regional areas

Telstra understand that smartphones are powerful tools which can assist regional and rural customers. Telstra's research shows that the type of smartphone usage in regional areas is similar to metro areas, with people accessing social network sites, downloading videos and accessing the internet for things like information and news. Farmers also use them for checking commodity prices and weather, and like other small business owners, smart phones are increasingly being used for email access and appointments. Therefore, while the mobility of wireless is very useful, Telstra does not consider there to be specific issues relating to regional use of smartphones.

In response to bill shock, Telstra has taken a number of proactive steps in relation to expenditure management tools in recent years. In particular, Telstra:

- introduced shaping on our BigPond® fixed broadband plans in 2009 when customers reach their plan allowance (instead of excess usage charges) to help customers manage their expenditure (*not specific to mobile, but relates to BigPond® internet services*);
- recently announced we will introduce shaping on consumer post-paid mobile plans once customers reach their included data allowance or reach 25Mb on 'pay as you go' plans, for data usage in Australia, to give customers more control over their mobile data usage;
- provides a range of online tools to assist our customers to monitor their data usage, such as a Mobile Data Usage Meter which is available to customers online and on their handset, and
- automatically sends customers who take up mobile plans with included data an SMS when they reach 80% and 100% of their included domestic data usage, plus they can also choose to receive email notification at 80% and 100% for this usage by registering for this email notification.

Telstra also actively provides consumer advice in relation to mobile devices. This information is available on Telstra's website and can be found at <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/advice/mobile/>. These programs include:

- Drive Safe
- ICE – In case of Emergency Initiative
- Advice about Mobile Phones and Hearing Aids
- Mobile Hoaxes
- Information on what to do if your mobile phone is lost/stolen
- Fighting Spam
- A mobile phone etiquette guide
- Recycling

## Appendix 1: My Offer Summary

### MY OFFER SUMMARY – TELSTRA COMPLETE HOME™ 100GB BUNDLE ELITE ADSL



<b>Bundle components</b>	<p>The services included in your bundle are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HomeLine® Reach for your home phone service</li> <li>BigPond Elite® ADSL Broadband for your internet service</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum monthly charge</b>	<p><b>\$98</b> for home phone access and broadband service</p> <p>If you take up a Telstra T-Box® or Telstra T-Hub®, there will be an additional charge, eg, \$11 per month for 24 months plus \$35 upfront and \$9.95 delivery fee for a T-Box or T-Hub.</p> <p>You will be charged for the calls made each month on your home phone as per the call charges below.</p>
<b>Call charges</b>	<p>These are the charges for calls under your HomeLine® Reach plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>local calls</b> unlimited – local calls included at no charge in your bundle</li> <li><b>call connection fee</b> 45c (for calls other than local and STD* calls)</li> <li><b>STD calls</b> \$1 per call</li> <li><b>calls to Telstra mobiles</b> 36c per 60-second block capped at \$1 for first 20 mins per call 24/7</li> <li><b>calls to non-Telstra mobiles</b> 36c per 60-second block capped at \$2 for first 20 mins per call 24/7</li> <li><b>calls to international numbers</b> international call rates vary depending on which country you are calling. For example, below are the rates for calls to landlines in three popular destinations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Kingdom 2c per min</li> <li>United States 2c per min</li> <li>New Zealand 5c per min</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Different rates apply to calls to international mobile numbers. Calls are charged per 60 second block. International Value Pack rates apply to your Bundle. For all international call rates, see <a href="http://telstra.com.au/long-distance-rates">telstra.com.au/long-distance-rates</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>calls to 1300 numbers</b> 30c per call, except for calls to 13 2200, 13 2000, 13 2203, 13 2999, 13 3033 and 13 7 663, which are free</li> </ul> <p>Calling Number Display and MessageBank® are included at no charge in your bundle.</p>
<b>Broadband usage allowance</b>	<p><b>100GB</b> monthly usage allowance</p> <p>If you exceed your 100GB usage allowance in a monthly billing period, you won't be charged extra for use. Your broadband speed will be slowed down to 256kbps until your next billing period begins. Your unused monthly usage allowance expires each month.</p>
<b>Changing bundles</b>	<p>You can change between ADSL Complete Home Bundles once per monthly billing period without charge.</p> <p>If you move to a Complete Home TV Bundle, FOXTEL from Telstra charges may apply.</p>
<b>Broadband speeds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BigPond Elite ADSL can provide download speeds up to a maximum of 20Mbps to eligible customers in selected areas with upgraded exchanges, and up to 8Mbps in many other areas but average speeds will be lower.</li> <li>Actual speeds vary due to many factors such as your distance from an exchange, the network connecting the exchange, your equipment and software and internet traffic.</li> <li>Download speeds on devices connected via a Wi-Fi modem or network extender may be slower than on devices connected by ethernet cable.</li> </ul>
<b>Modem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may add a self-install Standard Home Network Gateway to your bundle for \$24, or a self-install Premium Home Network Gateway for \$48.</li> <li>If you would like your broadband service professionally installed, separate charges apply.</li> <li>A \$9.95 delivery charge may apply for self-install modems.</li> </ul> <p>Home Network Gateway modems professionally installed or purchased directly from us (online or over the phone but not in retail stores), are configured to work only with a BigPond or Telstra Broadband service.</p>
<b>T-Hub or T-Box</b>	<p>If you've chosen a Telstra T-Hub and/or T-Box, you may be charged an upfront fee and then a monthly repayment for the duration of your 24-month term.</p>
<b>Billing</b>	<p>Each month, you will be billed in advance for the Minimum Bundle Monthly Charge and billed in arrears for calls made during the month. If you take up a bundle part way through a monthly billing period, your first or second bill will also include charges for the first part month when you took up the bundle, as well as your full Minimum Bundle Monthly Charge in advance.</p> <p>You may be charged for individual services until all the services in the bundle are connected. As a result, your first or second bill may be higher or lower than usual.</p> <p>This bundle requires paperless billing and electronic payment. A \$2 fee will be applied a month in arrears if you receive a paper bill and/or make a bill payment in person or via mail. Some exemptions apply. To set up Email Bill, visit <a href="http://telstra.com/emailbill">telstra.com/emailbill</a>. To set up Direct Debit or for information on other bill payment options, visit <a href="http://telstra.com/billpay">telstra.com/billpay</a></p>
<b>Telstra Plus</b>	<p>Telstra Plus service provides you with expert help on a wide range of services. Helpdesk service (over the phone) from \$99, in-home service from \$179. To find out more, please call 13 PLUS (13 7587) or visit <a href="http://telstra.com.au/telstra-plus">telstra.com.au/telstra-plus</a></p>
<b>Minimum term</b>	<p><b>24-month</b> minimum term</p>
<b>Other charges</b>	<p>If your home phone stays connected for three months or less, you will be charged a \$100 connection fee.</p> <p>If you cancel your bundle or one of the services within your bundle early or move to another plan before your bundle has ended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you will be charged an early termination charge (ETC). The ETC decreases by equal instalments each month you stay on your bundle. Your maximum ETC at the start of your bundle is <b>\$360</b></li> <li>you may need to pay any outstanding balance for your T-Box or T-Hub</li> <li>your bundle benefits will be removed and standard charges will apply to your remaining services.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum plan cost</b>	<p>The minimum amount that you will pay over the period of your contract including a \$24 Standard Home Network Gateway is <b>\$2,376</b> on a 24-month plan plus a \$9.95 delivery fee.</p>

This is a summary only – the full legal terms for this bundle are available at [telstra.com.au/customer-terms](http://telstra.com.au/customer-terms)

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