

Opening Statement

Good evening senators.

We are not able to be in Canberra tonight, of course, but online with me tonight are Chief Operating Officer, Kathrine Dyer, and Chief Customer Officer, Brad Whitcomb.

Since we met in May, we have continued to make significant progress in key areas related to the new phase of operations for NBN Co.

We work closely with Industry, delivery partners and retail service providers to ensure we have the best possible processes so that customers get great service and retailers can sell our products with confidence.

Our connect and assure customer and operating metrics are strong and improving and this reflects the huge amount of work from Kathrine and her team and the wider industry in consistently improving systems and processes.

We have also seen great progress on our international debt raising, our upgrade programs, co-development programs, improving services in regional Australian and network resilience.

Just to expand on these points, we have now raised a total of \$18.7 billion from debt capital markets, including \$9.85 billion in bank facilities, allowing repayment of \$11.4 billion of the \$19.5 billion Commonwealth loan.

We are well on the way to completely refinancing the loan in mid-2024.

In August, we released the 2022 Corporate Plan, which outlines how we continue to lift the digital capability of Australia and also sets out progress against the \$4.5 billion in network investments.

We have announced more than 1.4 million FTTN premises that will be able to order speeds close to 1 Gbps through a fibre lead-in. Construction has been going well, with the network build completed in a number of areas already.

Before residents can start ordering the higher speed plans, we need to work with our retail partners to ensure the ordering systems and connection processes are right and this testing phase is now underway.

Meanwhile, 93% of our HFC footprint can now order our Ultrafast wholesale plans of close to 1Gbps, which means 40 per cent of all fixed-line customers can access these speeds; a proportion that we expect to grow to 75% over the next two years.

In regard to co-investments, NBN Co and the Victorian Government signed a landmark agreement that will see significant co-investment for faster broadband services to more areas of Victoria.

The Victorian Government has committed \$73 million for co-funding new nbn™ network infrastructure in key areas of the state.

We will also make funds available and the first project will create eleven new nbn™ Business Fibre Zones in Victoria.

This creates a total of 295 zones that are expected to cover more than 860,000 business premises across Australia. Importantly, 40% of the Business Fibre Zones will be located in regional areas.

This really is game changing.

It enables access high-speed fibre, enabling innovation, driving employment and opening pathways for new products and services.

Our collaboration with the Victorian Government is a blueprint for continued co-investment with state and local governments as we work together to improve services right across the nation.

This model of partnering with states makes sense with the initial build completed and new opportunities emerging to improve our services.

This new phase is also reflected in the Government's new Statement of Expectations, released in August.

Crucially, the statement recognises the need for NBN Co to generate sufficient revenue to continue investing in the network to meet the current and future needs of Australians.

This is a fundamental point and will help guide discussions with the ACCC and with retailers through the Special Access Undertaking variation process.

The expectations of government are, I believe, aligned with those of the community.

Broadband connectivity is now so integrated into social and economic life that the community does expect a secure and capable network that they can rely on.

It is widely recognised that through the COVID lockdowns, the network carried the digital load and supported Australians through the significant changes in healthcare delivery, education, work and entertainment.

The team at NBN Co is very proud of this and we will continue to support Australians through good times and bad.

Which, finally, brings me to our preparations for the summer ahead.

As we head into the next bushfire and storm season, we know the network will be tested again.

A key driver of network outages during bushfire events is a loss of mains power, not direct fire damage to our assets.

That is why we have enhanced our power management capabilities and will provide significant backup power and essential connectivity when and where it is needed.

This month we launched our Emergency Management Preparedness Campaign with the addition of 58 new pieces of temporary infrastructure, including Network on Wheels, MultiTech Trailers, and hybrid power cubes. These will be stationed in different locations across the country, ready to be deployed.

While we hope to never see a repeat of the devastating events of previous summers, we know that emergencies can occur anywhere, at any time, and NBN Co is ready to assist communities as they prepare, endure, and recover from these events.

With that, Kathrine, Brad and I are delighted to take your questions.