

Getting a satellite internet connection through the new NBN Co Interim Satellite Service



OVERVIEW

Our BUSHTECH #40 which was published in 2008 described some key features of satellite Internet connections, and how to get a subsidised service through the Commonwealth Government's Australian Broadband Guarantee (ABG) Scheme. While customers of the old scheme will continue to receive services, new customers will instead be offered a place on the new scheme, the NBN Co Interim Satellite Service (ISS). Both satellite services are similar, as are the steps you need to follow to apply for a service, so much of the advice in BUSHTECH #40 still applies. The ISS provides a subsidy that is designed to cover the 'up front' costs associated with supplying and installing the satellite receiver dish and modem in your remote location and reduce the cost of your monthly usage fee to a rate similar to that paid by people in towns and cities.

This BUSHTECH describes the new application procedure. It will help you if you have already read BUSH TECH #40 and have a good idea what speed and amount of data (quota) you want.

ELIGIBILITY FOR A SERVICE

Because ISS is intended mainly to help people in remote areas, it is only available to people who cannot get an Internet service classed as 'metro-comparable', such as phone line based broadband (ADSL) or a 3G mobile data service. To find out if a metro-comparable service is available in your location, you will need to access an existing Internet service (at say a library or community centre), and go to the website <https://bcms.dbcde.gov.au/NBNBSL/>, or phone NBN Co on 1800 881 816 (free call) weekdays between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm for assistance.

On this website, there is a 'service locator' tool which uses the address or location information that you enter to check which types of service are available in your location. If the service locator tool confirms that metro-comparable services are not available and that satellite is your only option, it will also list a number of approved satellite Internet Service Providers (ISPs or providers) that you can contact for further information.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

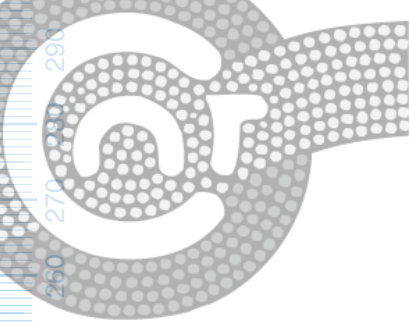
You must be either a home customer, a small business or an Indigenous community (not a government or school) organisation. If you are a home customer, the connection must be to your permanent home, and you must have been living there or are intending to live there for at least 12 months. The home must be a permanent structure.

If you meet these requirements, you can then register online or over the phone, and an information pack and application forms will be mailed out to you. If you have trouble completing the registration, ask a relative or friend to help you.

SELECTING A PROVIDER AND PLAN

Each Internet Service Provider has a range of plans, with different combinations of speed, monthly quota and price. Other features such as the plan duration may also vary. Check back with BUSHTECH #40 for further advice on these choices, and contact one or more of the providers to discuss the options if necessary. Most of this information is listed on the provider's website. If you don't have access to the Internet, ask them to post the information out to you.

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Remote community residents, Rosita (visitor), Esmeralda with Karen's daughter, Karen and Cynthia looking at Google Earth.

Plans are normally paid for month by month. Typically you can pay by credit card or direct debit from your bank account. Choose a provider with a plan you can easily afford and that doesn't charge any extra if you go over your monthly download quota.

ARRANGING THE INSTALLATION

Once you have chosen a provider and service plan, contact them again and they will tell you the steps you need to take and the further information you must provide to arrange for service. Since the 1.2 metre satellite dish will usually be installed on the roof or wall of your house, you need to give the provider some information in advance. You will need to tell them:

- The name and contact details of the home owner;
- Whether permanent 240 volt electricity is available in the house;
- Whether the house is single storey;
- Whether the roof has a clear view in the direction of the satellite (they will tell you the direction);
- A day and time when you will be home for the installation contractor to come.

If you are not the building's owner, the owner's written permission will generally be required.

Because weather, road conditions and other factors can affect the installation schedule, the timing may need to be changed along the way. It is important that you give the installer a reliable phone contact at or near your location so that you and they can keep in touch on these adjustments.

The installation itself usually only takes a few hours. The modem (an electronic box that sits between the dish and your computer and is about the size of a set-top box — see the photo below) will be installed as close as possible to where you want it — it is a good idea to use a high shelf that small kids cannot get to. The installer may provide a network cable to connect the modem to your computer, but check with them on this beforehand, and if you need a very long network cable ask about that too.

Once the installer has tested your service, they will notify your provider, and you will be advised (possibly on the same day) that you can start using the Internet if your computer is ready. Monthly charges start from the time of installation. There may also be a separate cost for the installation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

NBN Co Interim Satellite Service (as at October 2011) <http://www.nbnco.com.au/our-network/fibre-wireless-satellite/satellite.html>
BUSHTECH #40 Compiled by Andrew Crouch



A typical satellite modem for NBN services.