



# Media release

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## Fast broadband helping to drive greater female entrepreneurship

The **nbn**<sup>™</sup> broadband access network is helping women work how they want, where they want

Fast-broadband connectivity is contributing to a boom in female entrepreneurship and giving women more flexibility to choose where and how they work, according to new research released today by NBN Co today.

The *Connecting Australia Enterprising Women Report*, commissioned by NBN Co, uses research from AlphaBeta's first national economic and social study to understand the impact of the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> broadband access network on the lives of Australians and the economy.

More Australian women are choosing to become their own bosses, with self-employed women in **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network connected regions growing on average 2.3 per cent a year, or 20 times the pace of growth in the number of self-employed women in areas not yet connected to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network.

New economic analysis, to be released at the National Press Club televised event on female entrepreneurship today, examines the links between connectivity and Australia's female entrepreneurship boom.

### Key *Enterprising Women* findings include:

- **Enhanced workplace flexibility:** The number of self-employed women working from home grew on average at twice the pace in **nbn**<sup>™</sup> connected regions, compared to all other self-employed people in non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> network regions. Up to 830 women were self-employed women working from home due to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> effect last year. Up to 52,200 additional women are expected to be self-employed by 2021, attributable to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> access network.
- **More opportunities for part-time work:** The number of self-employed women working part-time grew on average five times the pace in regions connected to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network compared to non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> regions. There were up to 3,400 self-employed women working part-time with the help of the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network in 2017.
- **Greater female entrepreneurship in regional areas:** In areas of regional Australia connected to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network, female self-employment grew by an average of 2.4 per cent a year compared to 1.5 per cent annual growth in metropolitan **nbn**<sup>™</sup> areas. In non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> areas, female self-employment in regional Australia actually contracted 0.8 per cent a year on average while in metro non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> areas female self-employment only grew 0.4 per cent – just under a third of the pace of nbn-connected metro-areas.



- **More participation:** In non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> network areas, self-employment by women who did not finish Year 12 contracted by an average of 3.9 per cent a year. But in **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network connected regions, the number of self-employed women who left school early remained steady. Up to 2,100 women who didn't finish school are estimated to be self-employed with the help of the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network.

**NBN Co Chief Executive Officer Stephen Rue said:**

“Whether it’s cutting out the long commute, getting connected to the workforce sooner after having a child, or finding new opportunities for work from regional Australia, fast broadband is supporting new ways that women are engaging with the workforce.

“We know flexible working arrangements and self-employment are attractive. Ninety-two per cent of self-employed women are mothers and 80 per cent of self-employed women have dependent children. The **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network is helping to provide real opportunities for women to find that balance between an engaging career and family life.

“Opportunities for self-employment for women in regional areas can be limited. However the *Connecting Australia Enterprising Women* research shows faster growth in female self-employment in regional **nbn**<sup>™</sup>-connected regions compared to metropolitan equivalents. It also found **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network connectivity encourages more women who didn't finish high school to run their own business, defying an otherwise negative trend of shrinking female self-employment for non-school leavers.”

**[RedBalloon](#) Founder and [Big Red Group](#) Co-Founder, Naomi Simson said:**

“I’ve visited and addressed crowds in places from Mt Isa to Shepparton, Tasmania to Bundaberg – and the number one thing I’ve noticed and been excited to see shifting more and more is the ability for so many locals to enjoy an incredible lifestyle while maintaining employment, largely through remote working.

“They may commute weekly or a few times a month to conduct face-to-face business meetings in the major cities, but the rest of the time they’re raising families in small country towns and rural areas; their lifestyles enabled by technology and connection via initiatives like the NBN.

“And when self-employed women in these communities become true ‘entrepreneurs’ or business owners, employing others in the local community, that’s when the real value and impact will be amplified even further.”

For more information about the report, [visit the \*Connecting Australia\* website.](#)

**ENDS**

- The *Connecting Australia Report* was commissioned by NBN Co through independent research agency AlphaBeta. It combines national census data with an Ipsos survey of 3500 individuals across 1700 postcodes in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, including **nbn**<sup>™</sup> connected regions and non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> connected regions.



- An **nbn**<sup>™</sup> connected region or area is defined as regions or areas where the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> rollout is more than 90 per cent complete. A non-**nbn**<sup>™</sup> connected region or area is defined as regions or areas where the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> rollout is less than 10 per cent complete.

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