

School Student Broadband Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions (current as of October 9, 2023)

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General Overview

Who is responsible for the SSBI initiative?

To support students that do not have access to internet at home, the Australian Government has committed to the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI).

The Australian Government has asked **nbn** to implement the SSBI to provide free internet access, via participating internet service providers delivered over **nbn**'s wholesale broadband network.

What is the SSBI's objective?

To boost education opportunities and narrow the digital divide, the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) is providing up to 30,000 Australian eligible families with school age children (up to year 12 including Prep in Qld/Vic/Tas, Kindy in NSW, Reception in SA, Transition in NT/ACT and Pre-Primary in WA) with free **nbn**-powered broadband internet at home for one year.

Are devices included in the initiative?

Devices such as phone, tablets or computers are not included as part of the Initiative. A router/modem will be provided to families by their chosen participating internet provider to connect them to the **nbn** network.

How will families be informed about the initiative?

There are two ways for families to participate:

1. Eligible families can be identified and engaged through organisations such as participating schools or education authorities, and community organisations involved in the initiative (referred to as Nominating Organisations).
2. From 9 October 2023, people not connected via an existing Nominating Organisation will be able to self-nominate via the National Referral Centre (NRC). Eligibility rules will continue to apply, which

will be determined via an assessment conducted by the NRC.

How long do SSBI services run for?

An nbn-powered home broadband service will be provided to eligible families for one-year. The one year period starts from the day families activate an eligible School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI), service e.g., if a family connects on 1 December 2023, they will have free internet until 30 November 2024.

The last date when eligible families can place an order to receive an SSBI service, using an eligible voucher, is 30 April 2024 (or earlier if 30,000 orders are activated before this date).

What happens at the end of one year?

Prior to the end of the one -year period nbn expects that the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) participating internet provider will advise the participating family of their options to stay connected. Internet providers should not automatically place families onto a paid service without their consent. The Australian Government is considering options beyond the one year free period.

What nbn speed tier or Sky Muster Plan are internet providers supplying an SSBI participant?

The goal is for all School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) families on FTTN, FTTB, FTTC technology to be provided with the 50/20 wholesale nbn speed tier. It is recognised, however, that some locations in these networks will not be able to reach this wholesale speed tier and only wholesale speed tiers of 25/5 or 25/10 will be available.**

Eligible participants may therefore be utilising a range of speed tiers. These are outlined below:

nbn Access Technology	Eligible nbn speed tier
FTTN	25/5, 25/10, 50/20
FTTC	25/5, 25/10, 50/20
FTTB	25/5, 25/10, 50/20
FTTP	50/20
HFC	50/20
Wireless	Wireless Plus
Satellite	Skymuster Plus 50GB

** Note these are wholesale speed tiers. An end customer's experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the nbn network, depends on the nbn access technology and configuration over which services are delivered to the customer's premises, whether you are using the internet during the busy period, and some factors outside of nbn's control (like the customer's equipment quality, software, chosen broadband plan or how their provider designs its network). For nbn Fixed Wireless, speeds may also be impacted by the number of concurrent users on the nbn Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods. For nbn Satellite, end customers may also experience latency.

National Referral Centre

What is the National Referral Centre?

Access to the SSBI has become easier, with the launch of a National Referral Centre (NRC). Families with school aged students living at home can contact the NRC directly to check their eligibility.

Parents/guardians can contact the NRC directly to check their eligibility and access the Initiative, which provides free broadband to eligible families for one year.

When a parent/guardian contacts the NRC, they will check eligibility and support the family to get connected through a participating internet provider.

This approach allows parents/guardians to self-nominate, rather than rely on being identified by a SSBI nominating organisation. We want to make it as easy as possible for families that need this support to access the free service.

Existing nominating organisations can continue to refer families to the SSBI.

Can a parent/carer ask to be included?

Yes. From 9 October 2023, parents/carers are able to self-nominate via the National Referral Centre (NRC). Eligibility rules will continue to apply, which will be assessed by the NRC.

The NRC can be contacted on 1800 954 610 or at www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet

The SSBI is primarily intended as an affordability measure to help those with school-aged children.

Who is running the National Referral Centre?

After a thorough expression of interest and assessment process, Anglicare Victoria was awarded the contract to run the National Referral Centre.

Although Anglicare Victoria is a state-based organisation, it can be contacted by anyone in Australia interested in accessing the SSBI offer.

What services will the National Referral Centre offer?

The National Referral Centre (NRC) is the first point of contact for both self-nominating families and Nominating Organisations.

The NRC will:

- Help people interested in the SSBI understand if they are eligible, issue vouchers and provide information regarding participating retail service providers.
- Provide support to eligible people who are experiencing challenges redeeming the voucher.
- Provide follow-up support to eligible families who have been issued a voucher. The NRC will make three attempts to contact these families to offer their assistance in getting connected.
- Refer, where appropriate, ineligible people to other support services which may assist with financial hardship.
- Answer and resolve queries relevant to the Initiative.

For people from non-English speaking backgrounds, or people with accessibility challenges, the NRC can offer translation services through Language Loop and some of their own bi-lingual staff; and their website is equipped with ReciteMe technology: www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet

How can I use the National Referral Centre to join the SSBI?

Follow these 3 simple steps:

1. Contact the National Referral Centre (NRC) on 1800 954 610 (Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm AEST/AEDT), www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet or email studentinternet@anglicarevic.org.au. Callback and webchat functions are also available via the website.
2. Check your eligibility – the NRC team will assess your eligibility, by checking your residential address and asking you some questions to determine if you meet the Government’s eligibility criteria.
3. If eligible, you will be issued a voucher which can be redeemed at any of the participating School Student Broadband Initiative internet providers. The NRC can also assist with contacting your chosen internet provider or providing follow-up support.

How will the National Referral Centre be promoted to families?

The National Referral Centre will be promoted via various channels including a Ministerial launch, media partnership (including editorial and location targeted online stories), and amplification through MP and other stakeholder relationships.

Eligibility

Who identifies potentially eligible students?

Prior to 9 October 2023 the Australian Government required families to be identified by Nominating Organisations (e.g., schools, education authorities, charities and community organisations as identified by the Government). The names of participating nominating organisations are available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/ssbi>

From 9 October 2023, people not currently working directly with an existing Nominating Organisation will be able to self-nominate via the National Referral Centre.

How is eligibility determined?

To be eligible for the School Student Broadband Initiative, families working directly with an SSBI Nominating Organisation, or self-nominating through the National Referral Centre from October 9, must:

- Have a child living at home that is enrolled in an Australian school (up to year 12 including Prep in Qld/Vic/Tas, Kindy in NSW, Reception in SA, Transition in NT/ACT and Pre-Primary in WA).
- Not have an active **nbn**® network internet service at home. Having a mobile internet service does not affect eligibility.
- Either be referred by a Nominating Organisation or deemed eligible after contacting the National Referral Centre (NRC) (as applicable).
- Live in a premises that can access a standard* **nbn** service.
- Not have had an active **nbn** connection during the previous 14 days.

The SSBI is primarily intended as an affordability measure to help families with school-aged children. Callers to the NRC will be assessed for eligibility.

*A standard **nbn** service refers to a standard installation of nbn supplied equipment. This includes connecting a fibre optic cable from your street to the nbn utility box outside your premises, then inside to the nbn connection. Nbn does not charge end customers for a standard installation. But remember to ask your chosen SSBI participating internet provider if they have any other fees.

A small number of premises located in Limited Access Areas (any area within the footprint of the Satellite Network that cannot reasonably be accessed by road and would require some element of air or water transportation) are ineligible to access the SSBI program.

Can a family struggling to pay the cost of their existing broadband connection be involved?

To be eligible for the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI), families must not have had an active **nbn** home broadband internet connection in the previous 14 days. Families with other forms of internet connectivity, such as 4G or 5G wireless services over mobile, are eligible to be nominated by Nominating Organisations or self-nominate from 9 October 2023 onwards via the National Referral Centre.

How can a family get nominated? Who can they speak to?

To be eligible for the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI), parents/carers have two options:

1. Be identified and referred by a Nominating Organisation; or
2. From 9 October 2023, people not currently working directly with an existing Nominating Organisation will be able to self-nominate via the National Referral Centre (NRC). Eligibility rules

will continue to apply, which will be determined via an assessment conducted by the NRC. The NRC can be contacted on 1800 954 610 or at www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet

Importantly, the SSBI is primarily intended as an affordability measure to help families with school-aged children.

How is a voucher made available and redeemed by an eligible family?

The high-level process for a family getting a School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) service is outlined below:

- Step 1: Nominating Organisation identifies a family with school aged students who they believe would likely benefit from having access to home internet.
- Step 2: Nominating Organisation provides information about the initiative to the family and secures consent to check their primary residential address via **nbn** for eligibility.
- Step 3: Nominating Organisation provides address information to **nbn** to check that the premises is not currently connected to a service over the nbn network and is serviceable by the nbn network.
- Step 4: **nbn** confirms the premises is eligible and provides the Nominating Organisation with a numerical voucher code to share with the family. **nbn** will also share with the Nominating Organisation information about available participating internet providers for the family to review and contact. Nominating Organisation sends eligible family an eligibility letter containing the voucher code and internet provider information.
- Step 5: Eligible family selects and contacts preferred participating internet provider and redeems their voucher code to order a free one year service.

Additionally, from 9 October 2023, a family may self-nominate by contacting the National Referral Centre (NRC) on 1800 954 610 or www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet. Eligibility criteria will continue to apply and will be assessed by the NRC. If eligible, the NRC will issue a voucher for an SSBI service which can be redeemed by calling any participating SSBI internet provider.

How do I use the nbn website address checker to check if my home is connected to the nbn network?

To self-check if your address is connected to the **nbn** network

1. Go to: www.nbnco.com.au
2. Type your address into **Check Your Address**
3. If the result shows:
 - a. **Check with your phone and internet provider about ordering an nbn® powered plan**
You are not currently connected to **nbn** but can and may be eligible for the SSBI
4. **You are connected to the nbn® network**
You are already connected to the **nbn** network and are not eligible for the SSBI
5. **Any other message**
This location is not eligible for the SSBI as nbn does not service this address.

Will a family or student be required to provide identification?

Internet providers will have identification requirements. Identification may be required by internet providers to confirm the name of the account holder and the address where the internet service is to be provided. Callers to the National Referral Centre will be assessed for eligibility however provision of student identification is not required.

Can a premises be in an nbn area but deemed too expensive for nbn to connect?

There are some remote areas within the nbn satellite footprint that are excluded from participating in the School Student Broadband Initiative due to operational and access difficulties as well as commercial factors. For example, these are areas where nbn cannot access by road to connect the customer or to provide maintenance services.

What about other students who may not live at home, are enrolled in TAFE, or other similar situations?

- **Adolescent student living away from home and enrolled in a school or alternative vocational pathway** – eligible, so long as an adult is able to engage with **nbn**, internet provider, and National Referral Centre (NRC) when an application for the initiative is being made or assessed and connections are being installed at the premises.
- **Adult/s (>18 years of age) enrolled in school and undertaking year 11/12 or equivalent** - eligible
- **Adolescent student enrolled in school and undertaking formal vocational education at an appropriately established and registered institution (i.e., TAFE)** – eligible, so long as an adult is able to engage with **nbn**, internet provider, and NRC when an application for the program is being made or assessed and connections are being installed at the premises.
- **Adolescent student undertaking relevant state or territory Department of Education approved home schooling** – eligible, so long as an adult is able to engage with **nbn**, internet provider, and NRC when an application for the initiative is being made or assessed and connections are being installed at the premises.
- **Adolescent student undertaking paid apprenticeship or formal vocational education and not enrolled in school** – ineligible

Can anyone join the SSBI?

The SSBI is primarily intended as an affordability measure to help families with school-age children.

There are some remote areas in the nbn satellite footprint that are unable to participate in the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) due to operational and access difficulties servicing these remote locations, particularly on islands. These are areas where nbn cannot access by road to connect the customer or to provide maintenance services.

Why can't I join the SSBI if I recently disconnected an active service?

To ensure spots go where they are most needed, there are a number of eligibility criteria, which include not having an active **nbn** connection in the previous 14 days.

If you have any questions regarding your suitability for the program, please contact the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610 or www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet.

Nominating Organisations and Internet Providers

Do nominating organisations require family consent to support the family through the SSBI eligibility process?

Yes. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Organisations, and from 9 October the National Referral Centre (NRC), to manage any relevant consent requirements. Nominating Organisations and the NRC are obliged to comply with all privacy laws.

Which internet providers are participating in SSBI?

9 internet providers are working with **nbn** to provide free broadband to eligible families. As of 9 October 2023 the following internet providers are participating in the SSBI:

- Aussie Broadband
- Belong (Telstra)
- Exetel
- Launtel
- Lemonade Broadband (Brisbane only)
- Vodafone (TPG)
- Superloop
- SkyMesh – providing Fixed Wireless and Satellite services
- APN

How can a community organisation or charity be involved in nominating families?

From 9 October 2023, community organisations not already involved in the SSBI can simply refer parents/carers to the National Referral Centre, who will work to assess an individual parent/carer's eligibility.

What if the community organisation or school is uncertain about a student's/family's eligibility?

If an employee or staff member within a Nominating Organisation is uncertain about the family's eligibility, they should check with the initiative coordinator within their organisation. Nominating Organisations will apply their judgement as to whether a candidate should be referred.

For organisations not currently part of the initiative, simply refer the parent/carer to the National Referral Centre to have their eligibility assessed.

How is personal information of families being managed?

nbn will only receive address information from nominating organisations to check eligibility of premises. **nbn** does not ask for personal information about families or students as part of the initiative.

Participating internet providers are expected to manage the personal information of eligible families in the same way they manage information of existing customers.

The National Referral Centre is contractually obliged to abide by all applicable Australian Privacy laws when handling any personal information obtained as part of the eligibility assessment.

How can internet providers get support?

For participating internet providers, **nbn** has set up a dedicated SSBI help desk to support participating internet providers and nominating organisations. The contact number is 1800 626 269 and the operating hours are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT).

Participating internet providers can contact to get support for issues including:

- **Customer Eligibility Issues:** If there are issues in determining SSBI eligibility, some of which are highlighted in these FAQs, help desk can assist to resolve between participating internet providers and the Nominating Organisations
- **Poor Customer Experience:** If participating internet providers recognise that an SSBI family may be getting a poor experience with **nbn** (e.g. lead time for installation) they can contact and help desk which will escalate with **nbn** to provide support to the family.

How can Nominating Organisations get support?

For existing Nominating Organisations, the National Referral Centre (NRC) can be utilised to get help and support. Eligible families can be directed to the NRC to help answer any questions about the initiative and participating internet providers.

The NRC can be contacted on 1800 654 910 (Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm AEDT) or studentinternet@anglicarevic.org.au

Will nbn provide participating internet providers with a list of the Nominating Organisations and their key contacts?

nbn will share a list of Nominating Organisations that have signed up to participate in the School Student Broadband Initiative but will not share their contact details without consent.

nbn will also share a list of participating internet providers with Nominating Organisations as outlined in the Letter of Agreement (LOA) (e.g., RSP retail plan). The LOA includes a consent clause which permits this.

Which organisations are Nominating Organisations as part of the program?

A list of Nominating Organisations can be found at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/internet/national-broadband-network/school-student-broadband-initiative-ssbi>

Which organisations will be covering rural/regional/remote families?

A list of Nominating Organisations can be found at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/internet/national-broadband-network/school-student-broadband-initiative-ssbi>

From October 9, parents/carers (including those from rural and remote areas) not currently working with an existing Nominating Organisation may self-nominate via the National Referral Centre (NRC). Eligibility rules will continue to apply, which will be determined via an assessment conducted by the NRC. The NRC can be contacted on 1800 954 610 or at www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet

Connection and troubleshooting

What if a family is deemed ineligible for some reason by an internet provider once a voucher has been issued?

In the event a family seeks to redeem an eligible voucher with an internet service provider as part of the School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI), and that voucher does not work, the internet service provider should contact **nbn** for resolution.

Families with any queries regarding eligibility, or any other aspect of the initiative, should contact the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610 or www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet.

Where can families receive technical support?

Families should contact their School Student Broadband Initiative internet service provider during their service period.

Can a family move to a new internet provider during the 12 month period?

No. A School Student Broadband Initiative home internet service is not able to be migrated or transferred to another SSBI internet provider.

You can choose to disconnect and leave the initiative at any time within the one year period. If you cancel, you cannot re-join later.

If I move home during the one year period, will I lose my free internet service?

No. If you are eligible for the SSBI and move house during the one year period, your chosen internet provider will work with you to continue your free internet service if the next home you move into can be serviced by nbn.

I have a mobile phone plan with my service provider. Do I need to change to a different provider to take up the SSBI offer, if I'm eligible?

Mobile services and home broadband services are two different types of services.

If you are eligible for the SSBI, you can choose one of the participating internet providers to provide a service to your home.

I am renting my home and I'm eligible for the SSBI offer. Is that going to be a problem?

nbn has a detailed guide for renters who are connecting to the nbn network for the first time – please visit this website: [Preparing to connect | nbn \(nbnco.com.au\)](http://Preparing to connect | nbn (nbnco.com.au))

Are landline phones included in the initiative?

The Australian Government commitment is to deliver access to one year free **nbn** broadband internet. Internet providers may include landline phone services as an additional service at their discretion.

If I have a home phone, does this mean I am connected to the nbn network?

Not necessarily as nbn does not connect every home in Australia.

If you are uncertain if your home phone is connected to nbn or over the existing landline network, it is recommended you contact your phone line provider or you can follow the steps below in the FAQ '*How do I use the nbn website address checker to check if my home is connected to the nbn network?*' to self-check. The address checker can be found on the home page at www.nbnco.com.au.

Are internet providers required to pay the New Development charge for SSBI orders?

nbn has a process to waive these charges so that participating internet providers, and therefore the School Student Broadband Initiative, families will not be required to pay this fee.

What happens if, when ordering a service for an eligible SSBI family, a New Development charge is applied?

The process **nbn** is implementing should waive the New Development Charge before a participating internet provider places an order. If a charge is being presented to a valid School Student Broadband Initiative order, this is an error.

Internet providers should contact the **nbn** HelpDesk to assist with resolution.

Nominating Organisations should contact the National Referral Centre to assist with resolution.

What should an internet provider inform a family who may contact them to see if they can participate in SSBI?

Recommended response is:

From October 9, a family in need of assistance can self-nominate via the National Referral Centre. Eligibility rules will continue to apply, which will be determined via an assessment conducted by the NRC. The Centre can be contacted on 1800 954 610 or at www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet.

Information on the initiative and the organisations that are participating can be found at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/ssbi>

Other useful information

Where can families get information about safe internet usage?

Families are encouraged to get information and resources to help use their home broadband connection safely from the eSafety Commission site: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>

How many families can be connected? Is there a limit?

Up to 30,000 places for eligible families are available nationally and uptake will be monitored with the aim of enabling fair distribution across states and territories. Places are limited and eligible families are encouraged to activate their service as soon as possible upon receiving a voucher.

What happens if the program reaches 30,000 connected families?

Vouchers are valid until 30 April 2024 unless the initiative reaches the limit of 30,000 activations ahead of this date.

Where can a family find more information about SSBI?

1. If they have been identified as potentially eligible, by contacting their Nominating Organisation, or from October 9 2023, contacting the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610 or www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet
2. Visiting www.nbn.com.au/ssbi
3. Visiting <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/ssbi>

Families should be aware the SSBI is primarily intended as an affordability measure to help those with school-aged children.

What advice is provided regarding scams?

Scammers may try using the SSBI to impersonate a participating entity, such as NBN Co, to extort money. It's important to know that you will never be contacted and asked to provide bank details or to pay money to participate in SSBI by NBN Co. If you receive a suspicious phone call, report it immediately to the ACCC's Scamwatch website.