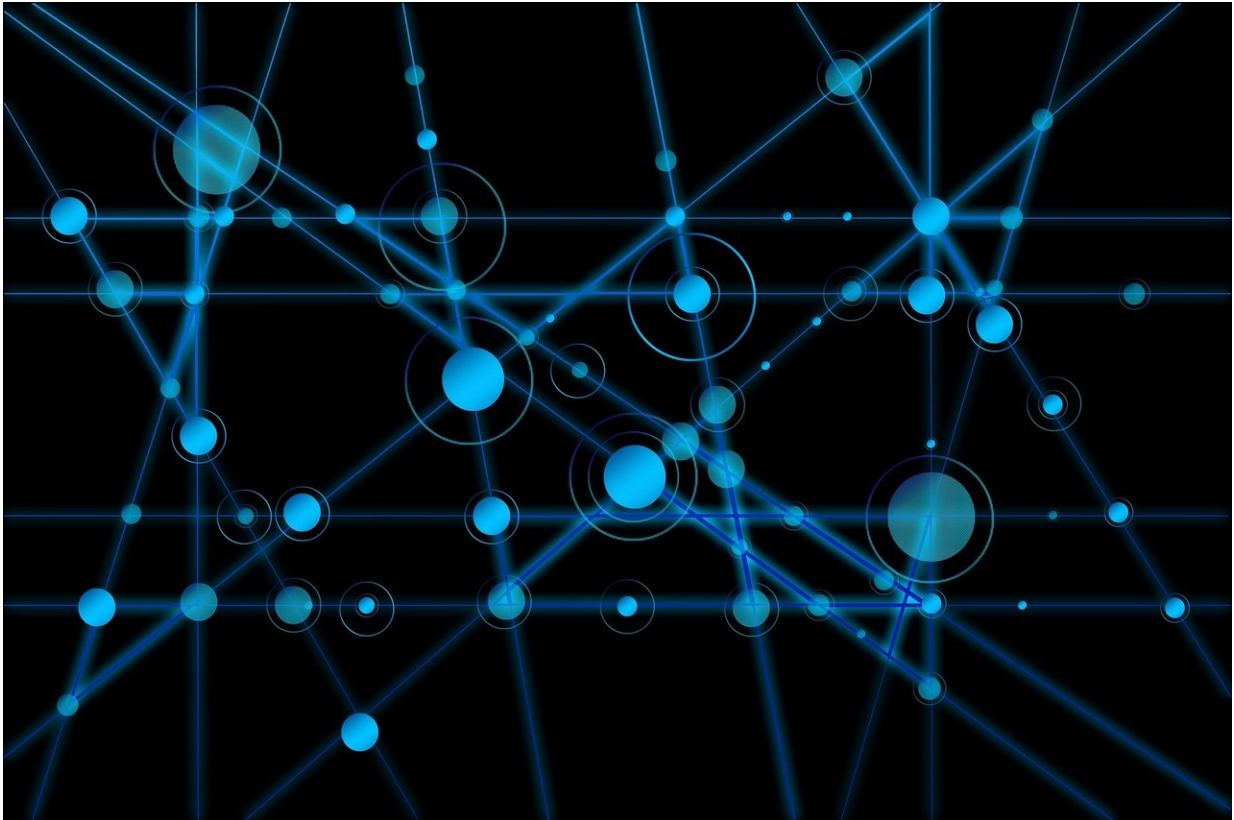


# COVID-19 exposes broadband gaps

August 28 2020

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The COVID-19 crisis has increasingly highlighted shortcomings in Australia's National Broadband Network, Flinders University experts say.

With access to [high-speed broadband](#) (HSB) and the internet via the

NBN now central to people's livelihoods, education, healthcare delivery and even [social connections](#), the Flinders University researchers say the "short-term politics of the 2013 federal election" led to decisions which caused an expensive rollout and current problems with the network.

"Our research shows that the way Australia's NBN was implemented has meant that access to HSB is expensive compared to other countries," Flinders University Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity researcher Dr. Matt Fisher says in a new paper.

"This contributes to more than one million Australian households not having an internet connection at home."

The paper, "Implementing Policy On Next-generation Broadband Networks and Implications for Equity of Access To High Speed Broadband: a Case Study of Australia's NBN" published in *Telecommunications Policy*, examines NBN [policy](#) and implementation from 2008 to 2018 through Australian Government policy documents and interviews with experts.

"We found that [equity](#) considerations competed with political and commercial imperatives during the rollout of the NBN," the Flinders Southgate researchers conclude.

"This resulted in positive and [negative consequences](#) for equity of access to HSB, with a change in policy and implementation in 2013 bringing greater risks to equity of access."

Dr. Fisher says the NBN rollout also created differences in the quality of HSB services in different areas. "This is likely to mean that people already well-off will gain more health and social benefits from the NBN than those less well-off.

"As work, education, employment, healthcare and other social services increasingly go online, the inequalities built into the NBN could add to health inequalities in Australia."

**More information:** Matthew Fisher et al, Implementing policy on next-generation broadband networks and implications for equity of access to high speed broadband: A case study of Australia's NBN, *Telecommunications Policy* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.telpol.2020.101911](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2020.101911)

Provided by Flinders University

Citation: COVID-19 exposes broadband gaps (2020, August 28) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-08-covid-exposes-broadband-gaps.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--