Mobile Broadband

Description

Your guide to mobile broadband

Mobile broadband (sometimes called mobile wireless) uses the 3G, 4G and 5G mobile network to connect your mobile device (mobile phone, tablet/iPad, or portable SIM-based modem) to the internet. It is different to a Fixed Wireless connection.

- Fix an issue
- Escalate an issue

Letâ??s start with the basics

01. What is mobile broadband and how does it work?

Mobile broadband uses Telstra, Optus, and Vodafoneâ??s network towers to grant internet access via 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. It can also be used to make voice calls (learn more about maximising your mobile phone connection).

Just like your TV or radio needs a signal to work, mobile broadband relies on good reception. A signal is sent to your deviceâ??s SIM card from a nearby tower. Other providers can offer these networksâ?? services, but their coverage may not be suitable. Itâ??s a good idea to check their coverage before signing up.

Troubleshoot your issue

Check out our troubleshooting guides

Take me there

02. How do I know if I have a good mobile broadband connection?

In the past, phone signal bars were a reliable way to check your reception. However, they no longer accurately represent service quality because devices display these bars differently.

For example, having fewer bars doesnâ??t always mean a weaker signal. **Your device may show four bars of 3G, three bars of 4G, and two bars of 5G, but those two bars of 5G could actually provide better coverage**. Furthermore, if you use a device to boost your service, your phoneâ??s bars will always show full reception, reflecting the technology in the area.

A better measure of service quality is your ability to use data and make calls. Due to tower congestion and poor coverage, mobile broadband may not always be the most stable choice for long-term home or business internet use.

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Take me there

03. How can I improve my mobile broadband signal?

A mobile broadband signal and quality can sometimes be improved using appropriate equipment. If you live in rural Australia or a spot where the signal is weak or blocked, you can try using an external antenna. Basically, the antenna takes the signal from a mobile tower, makes it stronger, and sends it to you, making your mobile broadband connection better.

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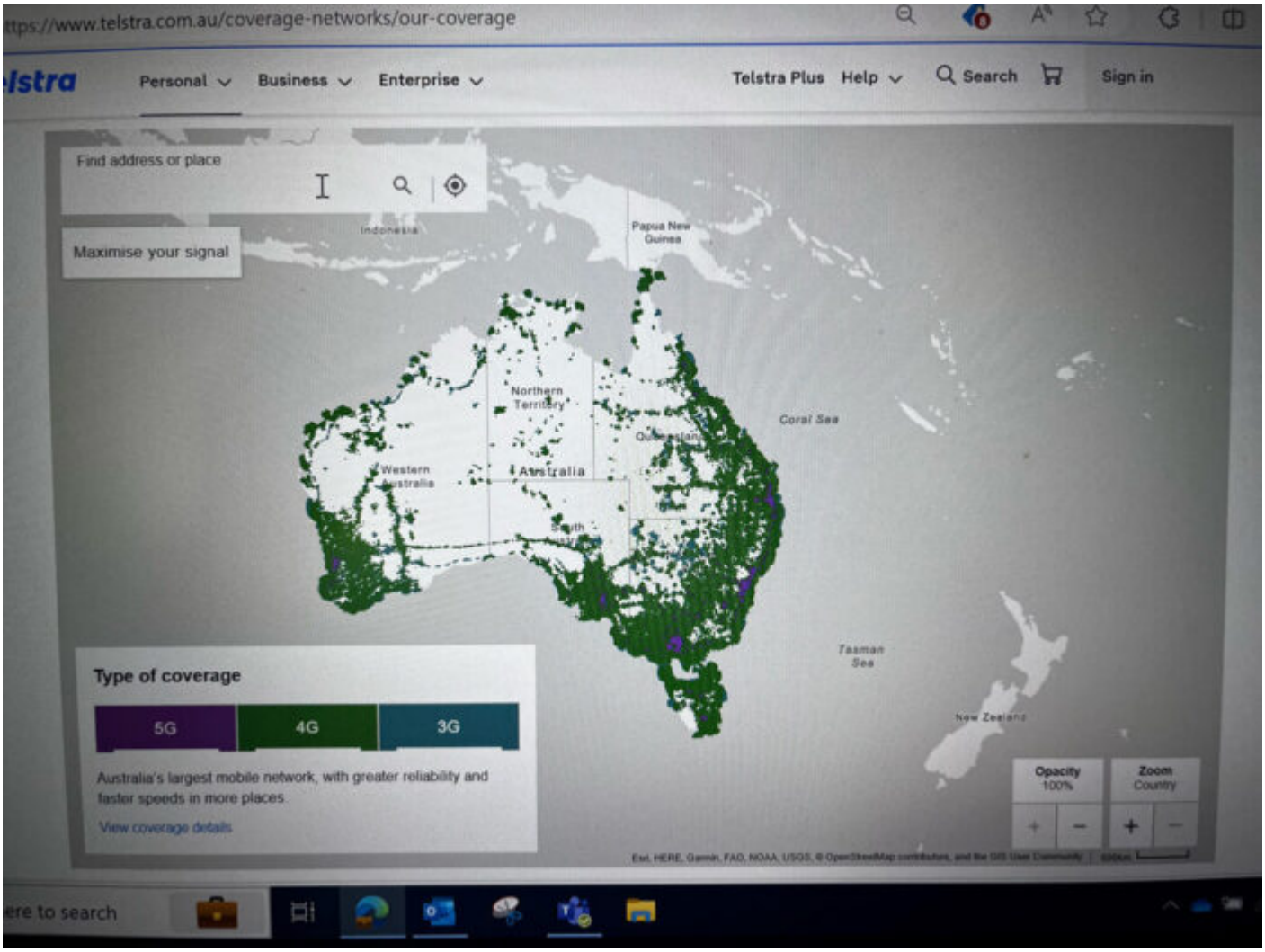
Take me there

04. How do I connect to mobile broadband?

01 Check Coverage Area



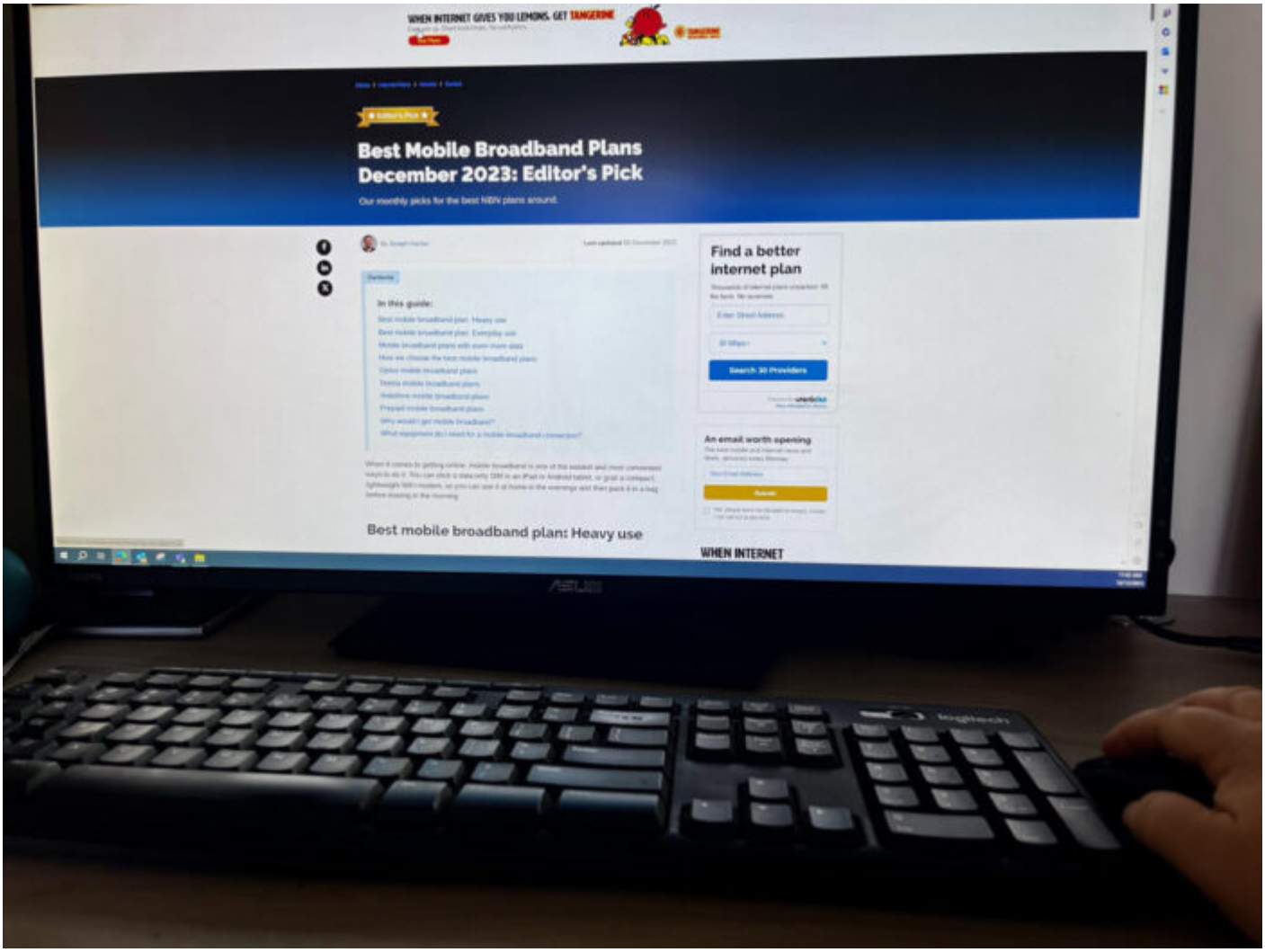
Before choosing a mobile broadband provider, consider where youâ??ll use your connection most â?? home, work, or travelling. Check each companyâ??s coverage in these areas. Keep in mind any local geography issues that might block signals or create â??black spotsâ?•, like hills, dense trees or even buildings in some areas.

Check coverage here:

- Telstra
- Optus
- Vodafone

Always have a discussion with your chosen mobile broadband provider regarding the level of coverage you can get at your location before entering a contract, and read the details regarding ensuring you have service within your contract. You can also do a test of the service at your location by purchasing a prepaid mobile SIM card from your preferred RSP service (for around $2 with a small amount of credit). Load this SIM into your mobile and test it in the areas you are wanting to use that service. This will give you an understanding of the level of service and any possible congestion issues prior to signing up.

02 Compare Plans and Choose a Provider



Individual internet service providers supply mobile broadband plans. Remember, mobile phone voice plans and mobile broadband plans offer different services. Voice plans may only have a small amount of data, while mobile broadband plans may offer larger data allowances, but no voice options. A number of mobile broadband plans also have restrictions on where you can use the

service or what devices you can use to access your network. For example, you can get a fixed mobile broadband service for your home location only, which does have a larger data offering.

To learn more about internet speeds for your area and choosing an internet plan, visit this guide or use these comparison tools:

- Mobile Phones and Plans comparisons
- Mobile Broadband comparisons

03 Set Up Your Mobile Broadband Equipment

Take your mobile broadband modem out of the box, add the new SIM card, and connect your laptop to your new Wi-Fi connection. Most current mobile broadband modems also have built-in antennas and routers to share the connection among many devices. Some of these modems also come with ethernet ports so you can connect your computers or other devices that lack wireless connectivity.

- **SIM-enabled devices**: simply put in a data-SIM and then use it as a Wi-Fi hotspot to share its connection with another device.
- **USB modem**: a great portable mobile broadband solution, provided you only need to use one device online at a time. While you donâ??t need to recharge the battery, it does need to be plugged directly into the device you want connected to the internet.
- **Portable Wireless Hotspot**: shares a mobile broadband connection with several devices simultaneously. These are typically battery-powered and recharged by plugging into a standard powerpoint. They operate as a small modem and router in one.
- **Fixed Home Wireless Modem**: needs to be plugged into a power outlet to work. These are best for those needing to use mobile broadband in the one location, such as at home.

04 Extend and Improve Your Connection

You can purchase routers and antennas which work in different ways to improve or extend your signal throughout your property and enable more devices to connect. Due to the 3G shutdown, remember to ensure your equipment is at least 4G-compatible before purchasing.

If youâ??re currently using the 3G network, switching to at least 4G-capable devices is essential before 3G is turned off for good. This includes phones, tablets, and devices that enhance mobile reception, like antennas. Check out each networkâ??s timeframes and what you need to do here.

Check out more useful resources here

See all resources

We make sure our values are reflected in our work

Free And Independent Advice

The Regional Tech Hub is funded by the Australian Government, ensuring the advice we provide to you is free. We also remain independent, so the options and information we put forward are all assessed equally.

Regional Support

We believe all Australians, no matter where they live, should be able to access affordable and reliable internet and voice services. Our team are all regionally-based and understand the challenges regional, rural, and remote residents face.

Keeping it Easy

Regional Tech Hub understands the jargon used around connectivity options and issues can be frustrating and confusing. You can relax knowing our resources and advice are accurate, straightforward and practical.

Clear Processes

We offer various contact options and service levels to suit your needs, ensuring you stay informed and on board throughout every step of your connectivity journey. We strive to make every interaction clear, easy and stress-free.

Still not sure what is the right option for you?

Chat to one of our team members and letâ??s get the conversation started. If we donâ??t answer, weâ??ll get back to you in no time at all. Or, request a free and independent connectivity report outlining your options.

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