



Mobile Phone

Description

Understanding & maximising your mobile phone connection

Mobile phones offer a second form of voice communications, allowing you to stay connected while you're on the move, working remotely, and more. Our tips and tricks below will help you get the most out of your mobile phone service.

- [Fix an issue](#)
- [Escalate an issue](#)

Everything you need to know about your mobile phone service

01. How mobile phone coverage works

Mobile phones require reception, in the same way your television or radio does. However, the number of signal bars on your phone doesn't always accurately reflect the quality of service.

Every device uses and displays signal bars differently, and fewer bars don't necessarily indicate less service. For example, two bars of 5G might be better than four bars of 3G. To determine your service quality, review your ability to use data, make calls, and maintain connections.

Mobile voice and internet

On a map, your location may appear to be in a good coverage area. However, there can be 'black spots' caused by obstacles like hills, thick tree coverage and buildings blocking the signal to the phone tower. Always confirm coverage with your mobile provider before signing a contract.

If you're in an area with weak reception, you may wish to look at additional services and equipment to help you optimise your connection in your region. Explore the resources below for more information:

- [Wi-Fi Calling](#) (Allowing you to use an existing Internet connection to send and receive mobile



calls and SMS)

- [Aerials, poles, and antennas](#) (Going high enough above obstructions to find good reception)
- [Mobile extenders](#) (Boosting and extending barely-there reception into a reliable resource)

Having trouble with your mobile phone coverage? Let's troubleshoot.

[Take me there](#)

02. How to choose the best service provider for your needs

Ensure your provider has suitable coverage in the areas you plan to use your mobile phone connection (e.g., at home, work, school). You can check coverage maps via the links below or give location information to the salesperson in-store or over the phone.

Check coverage here:

- [Telstra](#)
- [Optus](#)
- [Vodafone](#)

Other companies offer phone plans using or reselling these three networks. It is essential to check if they supply voice services in your specific region. Not all resellers have full access to their suppliers' networks. For example, phone plans purchased through Woolworths or Aldi may only use parts of Telstra's 3G, 4G, and 5G networks.

You can also use websites like the ones below to look for plans and providers:

- [Broadband Compared](#)
- [Canstar Blue](#)
- [Choice](#)
- [Compare Broadband](#)
- [Finder](#)
- [iSelect](#)
- [WhistleOut](#)

Keep in mind that these comparison sites may have strong advertiser influence and might not list all services in your area.

03. Boosting your existing mobile coverage & connection

If you have some mobile coverage in your area or nearby, a network extension device such as a [passive antenna](#) or [mobile repeater](#) (A.K.A repeaters or boosters) may help improve your signal.



Ensure any equipment you purchase is licensed, as illegal repeaters/boosters can interfere with the mobile network. Cel-Fi is currently the only brand in Australia licensed to operate on the Australian mobile spectrum. Telstra also rebrands units made by Nextivity under the Cel-Fi brand as Telstra Go or T-Go.

The Regional Tech Hub provides free and independent [connectivity reports](#). These identify the mobile services available at your location, suggest improvements like antennas and extensions and guide you on equipment placement.

[Get a connectivity report](#)

Understanding mobile phone network plans

Mobile phone plans are supplied by individual mobile service providers, and come in three main types:

Phone Plans

- Contract-based
- Avoids high initial cost
- Typically paid off over 12, 24 or 36 months
- 'Set & forget' – reliable data & call access
- Easy phone upgrades & service bundling discounts

SIM-Only Plans

- No 'lock-in' contract
- Lower plan costs as you already own the device
- Contract or month-by-month
- Easily switch between providers
- Downgrade & upgrade your device whenever you like

Pre-Paid Service

- No contract at all
- Pay for only what you use
- Top up when you need
- Flexibility & control over your data usage
- No credit checks & easy activation

Need more help choosing the right plan for you?



[Read more](#)

What the Telstra 3G shutdown means for you

By June 30, 2024, Telstra is saying goodbye to NGWL (3G) and hello to their new 4G Home Voice. They'll even upgrade 3G-based services to work with 4G before the 3G network goes dark. Most customers will transition to a 4GFW (4G Home Wireless Voice) solution, which includes a Telstra Smart Modem and a compatible antenna.

[Read all about it](#)

Know what you're paying for: Mobile phone service costs

01. Service costs

All plans, except prepaid plans, have a fixed monthly service cost. This fee will be charged to you on the same day every month. These plans include specific things, like a set number of local calls, text messages, data, and national or international calls.

You may have to pay extra charges if you use more than what's outlined. The details of these additional costs are in the contract you sign with the provider. Make sure you read it carefully and understand all terms before agreeing.

02. Pre-paid service costs

In a prepaid plan, you pay for credit that covers your plan's inclusions, which can cost anywhere from less than \$10 to over \$100. Once you've used up all your credit, you can't make any calls or use the internet until you pay for more credit. Depending on your plan and provider, you can still receive calls and usually call your service provider and emergency services even without credit.

Recharging your phone with credit can be done automatically at the same time each month or manually purchased – depending on your plan and provider.

03. Equipment & device costs

If you're paying off the phone with your plan, this will be an additional cost until you've paid off the device. Generally, all you need is the phone handset itself, plus the SIM provided to you by your service provider.

Insert the SIM into the charged phone and turn the phone on. It should immediately "see" the



network, register itself, and be available for use immediately.

04. Phone insurance

Plans with a handset may offer insurance against loss/damage. While insurance for your handset is optional, it can provide valuable protection for your phone investment. Customers should weigh the additional monthly cost over the contract's lifetime and consider alternative coverage options to make an informed decision.

05. Other extras

When choosing a mobile phone plan, be mindful of the additional features or extras some providers offer for a nominal monthly fee. These extras could include services like add-on data, international calling, or insurance coverage for your device. While these add-ons seem budget-friendly at just a few dollars per month, they can really add up and impact your monthly expenses.

06. Contract fees

Some contracts are available month to month, while others have a minimum duration (such as one, two or three years). Longer contracts may not have upfront equipment and connection fees but will charge if you terminate the service early.

If you need assistance in understanding a contract, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has useful information on its website.

07. Data & extra services

There's no point paying for more data than you need, so it's worth checking your current usage before buying a new plan. It's also worth looking at the extras you can get with some phone plans – like streaming services, international roaming, and overseas calls. Some of these may be free, while others may have additional fees. Check the fine print of your contract carefully to determine what you're signing up to.

Sometimes all it takes is a small adjustment

- [Boosting your connection](#)
- [What does the 3G shutdown mean for me](#)
- [Mobile Black Spot Program: Improved Mobile Service to Regions](#)
- [Parental Control and Data Usage Tips for Android](#)



[See all tech tips](#)

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.

Couldn't find what you were after? Give us a call!

Chat to us on our hotline with one of our team members and let's get the conversation started. If we don't answer, we'll get back to you in no time at all.

[1300 081 029](tel:1300081029)

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