



# Media release

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## New agreement bridges the gap between academia and telco to solve wicked problems

**A new five-year agreement between NBN Co and the University of Technology Sydney will bring together Australian students, academics and industry experts to tackle big challenges and capitalise on opportunities facing the telecommunications sector.**

The partnership is the first of its kind for the telecommunications sector in Australia and aims to bring together cutting-edge research and industry expertise to solve real world problems. Teams will develop projects across three core research streams – innovation, insights and technology.

Projects will take on areas such as artificial intelligence and pushing the capability of fibre, offering insights that could help **nbn** advance broadband technologies to continuously improve customer experience and strengthen the resilience and performance of the network.

The partnership also aims to attract more people – specifically women in STEM fields – into the Australian telecommunications sector by giving students the opportunity to work on a continent-sized piece of vital national infrastructure.

### John Parkin, Chief Engineering Officer of nbn, said:

“The **nbn**<sup>®</sup> network is central to the prosperity of Australia as digital transformation continues to change the way we live and work.”

“We expect that ten years from now our network will carry three times more data than it does today. That pace of change means we need to be ready to evolve our network and continue to develop our capabilities.”

“This agreement will allow industry insights to solve real world problems by applying cutting edge research, that will ultimately make the internet experience better for millions of Australian homes and businesses.”

Projects will be driven by problem-solving, showcasing the ingenuity and innovation of Australian academia while providing unparalleled opportunities for students, especially women in STEM fields, to shape the future of the telecommunications industry and build promising career pathways.



## Professor Andrew Parfitt, Vice-Chancellor and President of UTS, said:

"The ASTRID (Advancing STEM, Technology Research, Innovation and Deployment) program is one that aligns well with UTS's commitment to furthering our understanding of how technology interacts with and changes communities."

"We firmly believe in the power of universities and industry working hand-in-hand to tackle challenges faced by the telco industry, and that is why the strategic partnership between **nbn** and UTS is so important."

"ASTRID opens new doors of opportunity for researchers and students to engage with some of the key challenges, while promoting diversity in STEM and bringing Australian innovation to the forefront on a global stage."

"ASTRID will establish a new research team at UTS which will focus on technologies relevant to **nbn** and deliver impactful outcomes for **nbn** as well as the wider telecommunications sector."

A unique co-funding approach for ASTRID will leverage established academic and industry partnerships to enhance the potential for successful grant applications.

This strategic funding model supports longevity for the program, setting the stage for more collaborations between **nbn** and academia into the future.

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## Media enquiries

| NBN Co Media  | UTS Media   |
|---|---|
| Flornes Yuen  | Heather Nolan   |
| Phone: 02 9927 4200   | Phone: 0491 157 409   |
| Email: <a href="mailto:media@nbnco.com.au">media@nbnco.com.au</a> | Email: <a href="mailto:newsroom@uts.edu.au">newsroom@uts.edu.au</a> |