

NBN relocation journey

at

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1 Background

In 2015 NBN installed an NBN Utility box and above ground conduits on the veranda and the NBN connection box, Power Supply and Battery Backup and Telstra Wireless modem were installed on the lounge room wall.

Here's a schematic showing how the components are connected. The Telstra wireless modem is not shown, but plugs into the NBN connection box.

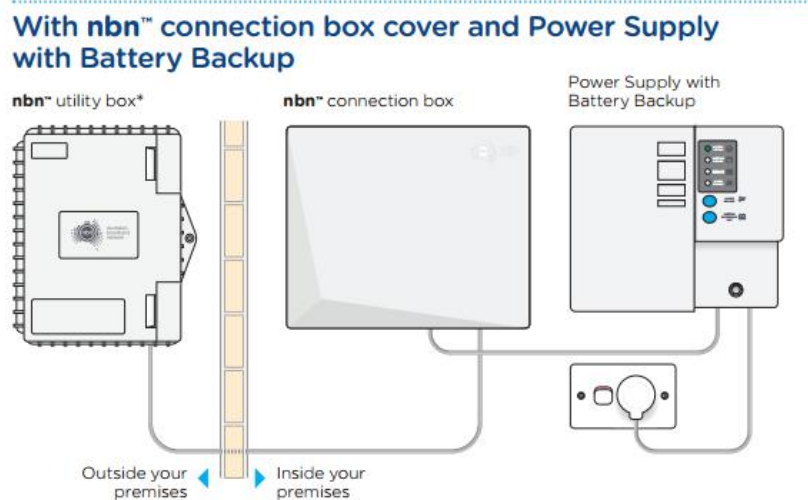


Figure 1 – NBN equipment schematic from the NBN users guide available at <http://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco/documents/nbn-fibre-user-guide.pdf>

There were several problems with the installation:

External appearance - As shown in Figure 2, there was a highly visible unsightly conduit on the front veranda. A corner of the white NBN Utility box can be seen on RHS behind the fairy fern that we planted in an attempt to reduce the visibility. It would have been a relatively simple job for the original installer to lift a few pavers and place the conduit where it would be hidden from view.



Figure 2 – Photo of conduit on front veranda. A corner of the white NBN Utility box can be seen on RHS behind the fairy fern that we planted in an attempt to reduce the visibility.

Internal appearance - The unsightly nature of the internal electronic equipment fitted to our lounge room wall is shown in Figure 3. Before NBN there was no visible equipment inside or outside our home.



Figure 3 – Photo of internal equipment

Equipment durability - Unprotected optical fibre passing through steel grill and exposed to risk of damage is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 – Close-up photo of exposed conduit and unprotected optical fibre passing through sub-floor vent

Wi-Fi Reception - Before NBN was installed, the main telephone and modem connection was in the kitchen at the end of the entrance hallway (shown in Figure 5) and reception was excellent throughout the house. Afterwards because of the thick internal brick walls we had very poor internal Wi-Fi reception signal strength. Coverage was only available in the lounge room, which we seldom used. There was no Wi-Fi signal where we spent most of our time, in the family room or upstairs bedrooms at the rear of our home.

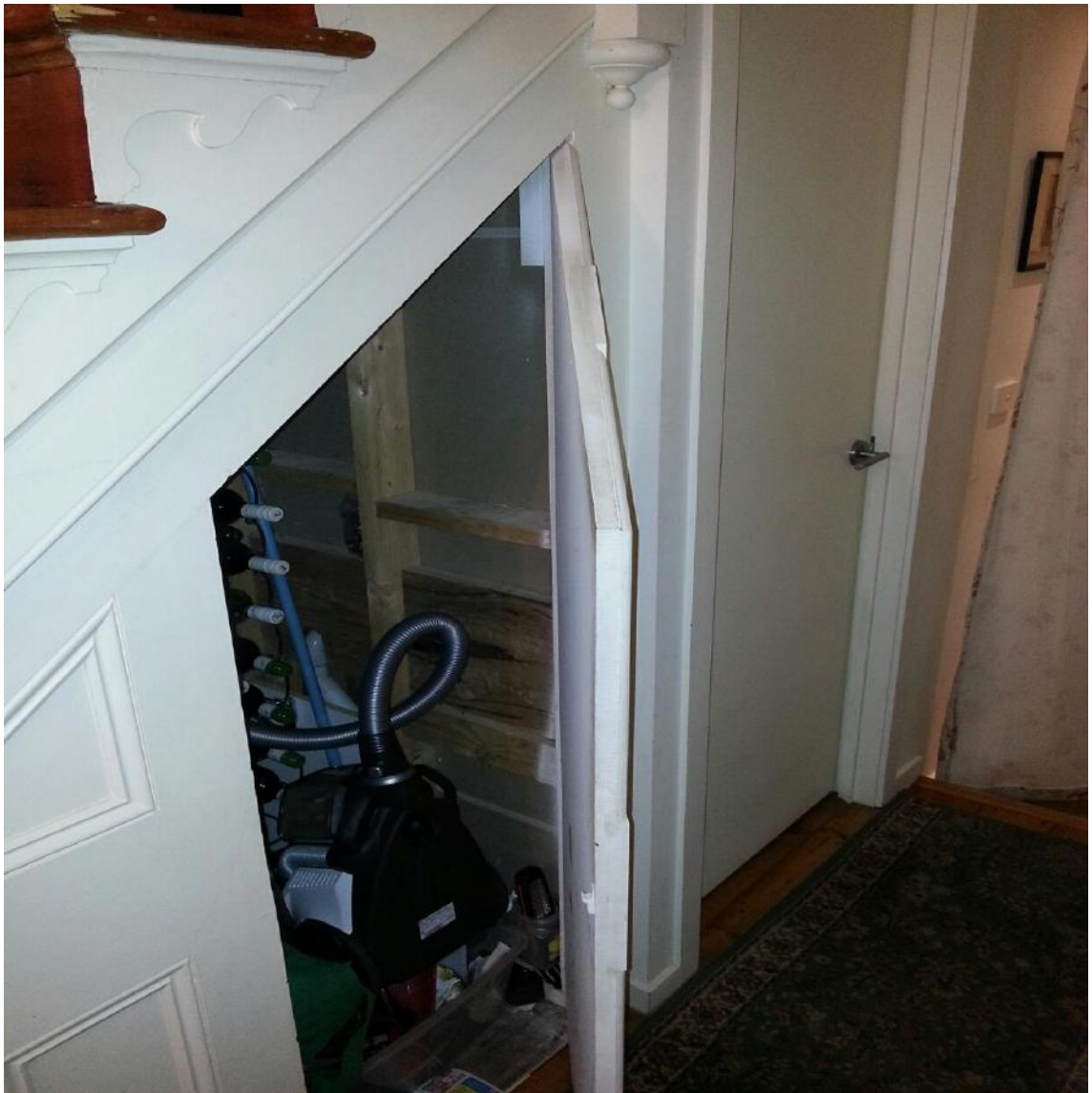


Figure 5 – Entrance hallway adjacent to the kitchen, also showing the stairwell cupboard.

2 Negotiations

In May 2016 after attempting unsuccessfully to resolve the issues with plants to hide external components and purchase of a Wi-Fi extender which was ineffective, we called NBN to discuss our concerns, and they said we needed to speak with our service provider.

We called then called our service provider, Telstra, and they suggested that we install a Wi-Fi extender at our cost to improve Wi-Fi reception. I explained our experiences and also expressed a view that this did not solve the other problems. I also explained that it did not seem fair that we carried the cost of purchase and operation of a device to fix equipment that we hadn't asked for. They referred us back to NBN.

We called NBN again, and explained our concerns, including that our preference was for NBN to relocate the internal equipment from the lounge room wall to the stairwell cupboard where it would not be seen and the signal would not have to pass through thick walls. We hoped that the central location of the stairwell would enable the Wi-Fi transmitter/receiver signal to travel up the stairwell to the third floor and along passageways into all rooms throughout our home. The NBN customer service representative said that they would consider our request.

While we waited to hear back from NBN, we called the telecommunications ombudsman and explained our concerns, and explained what we had done and been offered by Telstra and NBN. I emphasised that we were committed to having the NBN equipment relocated. They empathised with our situation and said that they would monitor NBN's response to our concerns.

After a couple of weeks we had a call and an email from NBN asking for photos and other details. After an additional couple of weeks I had another call from NBN agreeing to relocate their equipment at their cost, providing that we were available to assist and provide access beneath the pavers and beneath the floor boards.

I agreed to the arrangement, and a date was arranged during one morning during the week for the NBN technician to meet with me.

3 Relocation

Access beneath the floorboards proved to be very difficult with very little space as shown by a photo using a borescope in Figure 6. Bluestone foundation stones, and floor joints sitting directly on the soil prevented a clear view, and created many barriers.



Figure 6 – Photo of underfloor.

We had to cut and remove floorboards to create access holes in the lounge room as shown in Figure 7, and beneath the stairs as shown in Figure 8.



Figure 7 – Hole in lounge room floor boards.



Figure 8 – Hole in floor boards beneath stairs.

The time and effort required to penetrate the many barriers restricting access beneath the floor boards was considerable. Matters were made worse by the extremely cramped conditions as shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9 – Cramped access to the hole in floor boards beneath stairs.

The NBN tradesman and I ended up spending a total of eight hours, over two separate days, installing equipment, conduit and cables inside the stairwell cupboard (as shown in Figure 10), installing conduit and cables beneath the floor boards and relocating the conduit beneath the pavers on the front porch.



Figure 10 – NBN equipment beneath the stairs.

I also had to arrange for an electrician to install a 240V power point in the stairwell cupboard at my cost. Including wiring, parts and access difficulties, the power point installation cost us several hundred dollars.

4 Conclusions

Overall, the result was excellent, and in particular the:

- external conduits relocated, and invisible, beneath the pavers on the front porch;
- NBN equipment was relocated to beneath the stairs as shown in Figure 10; and the
- Wi-Fi signal is now strong and available in all rooms throughout our home.

Many thanks to NBN for their support.

By working closely with the NBN Technician and participating in decisions as problems arose, we were able to ensure that all problems were addressed in a satisfactory way. For others who want to go down this path, but may not have the interest or time to participate themselves, you could probably hire an electrician that is familiar with your home and your needs, to work with the NBN technician and achieve a similar result.