



MEDIA RELEASE
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**DONATE YOUR DATA: OPTUS PARTNERS WITH ABCN TO SUPPORT
DISADVANTAGED SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH THEIR FINAL YEARS OF
SCHOOLING**

As schools transition nationally to online learning during these unprecedented times, Optus and the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) are working together to provide disadvantaged secondary school students with a free Optus Prepaid mobile plan to keep them connected and support their studies through Optus' Donate Your Data program.

This program supports ABCN schools that are typically high needs* and located in low socioeconomic communities. During the first wave, Optus and ABCN will work closely with a small number of NSW principals to distribute several hundred SIM cards with the aim of scaling to support 6,000 significantly disadvantaged students nationally.

Optus CEO Kelly Bayer Rosmarin said: "During these challenging times, as schools across the nation shift to remote learning, we understand how difficult it can be for some young Australians who don't have regular access to the internet to stay connected."

"It is essential that young Australians can continue to learn and stay connected with their classmates, which is why we are delighted to be partnering with ABCN to ensure that students in most need are supported by our Donate Your Data initiative and have the connectivity in place to continue with their studies."

ABCN CEO Allegra Spender said: "The principals we've been talking to about the impact of COVID-19 are furiously working on the shift to remote learning. But if students don't have internet access, their ability to engage in education is in crisis. A few parents our principals have spoken to were nearly in tears hearing the news that ABCN has partnered with Optus to offer this program. It will certainly ease the stress on families who are hurting."

Tim Lloyd, Principal of Plumpton High School, one of ABCN's partner schools, said: "Thirty percent of our students don't have reliable access to the internet at home. One of our high-achieving Year 11 refugee students is panicking about missing out – the only device she has is a basic phone and her mother can't afford much data for her as well as four siblings. Without internet access she is isolated even though the school has provided her a laptop."



Since the program's launch on 2 December 2019, over 200,000 Optus customers have donated over 5,739,749 GB of data and thousands of students from The Smith Family's Learning for Life program, the KARI foundation, yourtown and Mission Australia will benefit from Optus' Donate Your Data initiative.

Optus is looking to expand the program by including additional charities and causes to help bridge the digital divide faced by young Australians living in disadvantage.

Optus Postpaid and Prepaid Mobile customers on eligible plans can start donating data today. For more information, visit [here](#) or check out the My Optus app.

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DISCLAIMER:

*ABCN partner schools typically sit significantly below the national Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) average of 1000 and have high levels of educational disadvantage.