

Those who rely their Telstra mobile phones and dongles for internet access are having a miserable time in Northcliffe right now. It sounds like things haven't been much better in Manjimup. Those using ADSL (landline based internet) have had a miserable time for many years now.

If you impatient or sceptical that things will improve, and don't want to put up with it any more, there are two competing ways to cure your Telstra-related migraines: Skymuster and Starlink. As a bonus, with your internet connected via either of these services, you can enable 'Wifi Calling' to effectively get a mobile phone booster around your home for sending and receiving texts and phone calls.

Skymuster NBN is cheaper than Starlink, since it is subsidised by our Government. Skymuster internet is provided through 2 Geostationary high Earth Orbit (GEO) satellites hanging over the equator at the same longitude as Alice Springs. You can purchase it through many different resellers including Skymesh, Activ8Me and IPSTAR. Unlimited data deals start at around \$65 per month. There are mixed reliability reports and if you are surrounded by trees your reception can suffer a lot, especially coming into winter. The install will be performed by a professional installer, fully funded by the NBN who also fund most of the hardware.

Starlink is available from either SpaceX or Telstra. It is more forgiving of interference, has vastly more capacity than Skymuster, and is by far the fastest most reliable internet Northcliffe has ever had. Internet is provided through an ever growing constellation of over 8000 Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, circling constantly around the globe. The plan is to replace these satellites every 5 years.

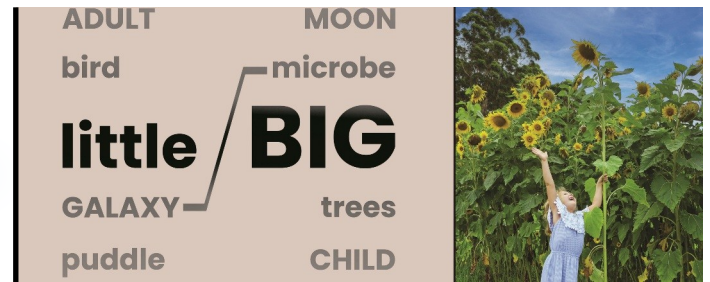
SpaceX offers a discount version of their service for \$99 per month, as well as their standard \$139 per month deal. The install is intended to be DIY, or otherwise require only basic handyman skills.

So far I have found the \$139 service to be 100% reliable with blazingly fast speeds. No reports yet on the quality of the \$99 service. Hardware is free if you sign up for 12 months (we're unsure if the free hardware option is available for the \$99 discount plan).

The Telstra Starlink option provides a phone service and a slowed down version of Starlink, for \$125 per month.

### Skymuster Will Not be Around in 10 Years

Skymuster satellites, unlike Starlink satellites, are not designed for regular replacement. Within another 5 years or so they will be obsolete. As a replacement the government has said they will contract with Amazon to provide access to the proposed Kuiper LEO fleet of satellites. There is scepticism about this plan with Amazon's Kuiper still in its early stages of development.



Northcliffe's 2025 Photo Competition, *little f BIG*, has a few weeks yet to run. The entry deadline is 18<sup>th</sup> May. Entry is free for up to 5 images with details here:

**northcliffe.org.au#littleBIG**

So far we don't have enough entries for a successful competition, so we're hoping they start flooding in soon...



Not everyone is struggling with the theme. Danielle Middleton captured the image above of her dog @Bindi.bergrum and friend, Jacinta.



Above, Cat Iversen's *Follow Mum*.

As a way to generate ideas, here's a suggestion. Take out your camera (a mobile phone is perfect) and dedicate 15 minutes to finding size differences around your place to photograph. My experience was that I had to put up with feeling uninspired for a few minutes before starting to see the examples around me. I didn't produce any masterpieces but it got me started...



This photo at Dave Evans Bi-centennial Tree was taken by me years ago so can't be entered but is a good example of *little f BIG*.

Graham Evans