

BUILDER CHECKLIST · NEWCASTLE & HUNTER

NBN Readiness Checklist for New Home Builders

A page-by-page rough-in and pre-handover checklist that keeps Newcastle new builds NBN-ready — before the plaster goes on. Written by a locally-licensed ACMA cabler for builders, project managers, tenancy coordinators and homeowners across the Hunter Region.

Why NBN readiness matters

Every new home in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock and the wider Hunter is entitled to an NBN service — and on any greenfield lot developed since the 2020 fibre rollout, that service is almost always Fibre-to-the-Premises. But entitlement is not the same as readiness. If the lead-in conduit, MDF wall, NTD position, dedicated GPO and internal Cat6 pathways are not designed into the build at frame stage, the homeowner ends up with a functional NBN connection stuck at the garage wall — and no clean way to get it into the study, media room or upstairs Wi-Fi dead zone.

The cost of retrofitting after handover is where builders take reputational damage. Cutting into finished plaster, chasing cornices, and running visible cable clip along skirtings is a conversation no builder wants to have with a client three weeks after their PCI. Getting the readiness right at rough-in adds well under 1% to the fixed-price build cost, and the customer-satisfaction dividend at handover is disproportionate to the effort.

What "NBN readiness" actually means

NBN Co is responsible for provisioning fibre to the property boundary and installing the Network Termination Device (NTD). The builder — or a licensed cabler engaged by the builder — is responsible for everything on the customer side of the NTD.

That includes the lead-in conduit path, the MDF (Main Distribution Frame) location, the dedicated 240 V GPO powering the NTD, the Cat6 or Cat6A tails from the NTD to every intended data outlet, and access provision for future service calls, moves-adds-changes and eventual technology refresh. A build that meets all five is *NBN ready*.

Pre-plaster rough-in checklist

Every item is a defect-free handover requirement.

- ☐ 01 50 mm (single dwelling) or 63 mm (multi-dwelling) PVC electrical conduit installed from boundary pit to internal MDF wall.
- ☐ 02 Draw wire pulled through the lead-in conduit end to end.
- ☐ 03 Lead-in conduit sealed at both ends against water, vermin and building-material intrusion.
- ☐ 04 Boundary pit position and depth agreed with the electrician and marked on the plan for handover to NBN Co.
- ☐ 05 Internal MDF wall selected — dry, powered, accessible after handover, out of wet areas and out of the ceiling void.
- ☐ 06 Dedicated 240 V GPO installed within 1 m of proposed NTD position on its own circuit.
- ☐ 07 Cable tray or minimum 25 mm internal conduit run from MDF to central patch panel location.
- ☐ 08 Cat6 or Cat6A cabling roughed-in to every intended data outlet — bedrooms, home office, media, kitchen bench, TV points, external eave for CCTV, alarm and Wi-Fi AP positions.
- ☐ 09 Every cable end labelled at both origin (patch) and destination (wall plate) to a documented labelling scheme.
- ☐ 10 Wi-Fi access-point positions marked on ceiling — ideally centred to open living areas, not tucked into corners or wardrobes.
- ☐ 11 Ceiling void access panel provided within 3 m of any planned Wi-Fi access point.
- ☐ 12 External conduit / weatherproof entry provided for any planned outdoor CCTV camera runs.
- ☐ 13 Site photos taken of every wall cavity before plaster fixing — one photo per room, filed against the job.
- ☐ 14 ACMA Registered Cabler engaged — never allow non-registered trades to terminate customer-side comms cabling.

Pre-handover / PCI checklist

Second walk-through — signed off at Practical Completion.

- ☐ 01 All Cat6 runs terminated at both ends onto keystones / patch panel to T568B standard.
- ☐ 02 Every run cable-tested (wire-map, length, continuity) and results attached to the cabling report.
- ☐ 03 Patch panel mounted in a ventilated location with cable management above and below.
- ☐ 04 NBN NTD position confirmed with NBN Co and lead-in cable ordered.
- ☐ 05 MDF cupboard fitted with a lockable door or louvre panel — never sealed shut.
- ☐ 06 Cabling report and As-Built diagram prepared for PCI handover.
- ☐ 07 Wi-Fi access points installed and commissioned (or made ready for owner-supplied router / AP install).
- ☐ 08 Homeowner briefed on NTD location, MDF cupboard access and Wi-Fi AP roles.
- ☐ 09 ACMA TCA1 Advice-of-Cabling Work form completed and lodged.
- ☐ 10 Certificate of Compliance issued and handed over with the House Manual.

Common mistakes builders make

Running the lead-in conduit uphill.

A lead-in conduit that dips upward inside the wall traps water. Slope the conduit downhill from the internal MDF wall to the boundary pit and provide a drainage weep at the low point.

Placing the NTD in the roof void or garage ceiling.

Ceiling voids overheat, are impossible to service after handover, and homeowners cannot reset the NTD after a power outage without a ladder. Locate the NTD in a serviceable wall cupboard, study nook or garage wall.

Skipping the internal conduit from MDF to patch panel.

Even a short 3-metre run without a conduit path forces re-plastering to add outlets later. Always leave a 25 mm draw-conduit between MDF and patch, even if the plan is only for a single outlet on day one.

Using Cat5e or generic 'data cable' on a new build.

Cat5e is discontinued for new builds. Netlink recommends Cat6 as an absolute minimum, and Cat6A for any run longer than 40 m, near mains cabling, or feeding a Wi-Fi 6E / Wi-Fi 7 access point.

Forgetting external Wi-Fi and CCTV cable pathways.

Retrofitting a weatherproof cable entry after roof battens are on is expensive and voids builder warranties on penetrations. Always provide external stubs at the eave line at frame stage.

Cable and conduit specs

Lead-in conduit	50 mm rigid electrical PVC single dwelling. 63 mm for duplexes. 100 mm for buildings of three or more units.
Internal draw-conduit	25 mm flexible PVC between MDF and patch panel, and between patch panel and any ceiling-void access point serving Wi-Fi APs or CCTV.
Data cable	Cat6 U/UTP LSZH-jacketed minimum. Cat6A F/UTP for runs over 40 m, near mains cabling, or feeding Wi-Fi 6E / Wi-Fi 7 APs. Never Cat5e.
Patch panel	Wall-mount 12-port or 24-port keystone patch panel with cable management, mounted at 1200 – 1800 mm above finished floor.
Testing	Every run wire-mapped, length-tested and continuity-tested with results attached to the cabling report.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to worry about NBN readiness on a single-dwelling build?

Yes — even single dwellings benefit from NBN-ready rough-in. If the builder has not left a conduit path, cable-tray or accessible MDF space, retrofitting is disruptive and expensive after the plaster and cornice are on.

What size conduit should I run for the NBN lead-in?

50 mm PVC electrical conduit from the boundary to the internal MDF wall is the industry-standard minimum for a single dwelling. Use 63 mm for duplexes and townhouses. The conduit should slope away from the building, contain a draw wire, and terminate in a wall-mounted, service-accessible pit.

Where should the NTD go?

Powered, ventilated, out of reach of moisture — typically the garage, study nook or purpose-built comms cupboard. Avoid ceiling voids, wet areas and the meter box. Within 1 m of a dedicated GPO.

Who is responsible for internal cabling — the builder or NBN Co?

NBN Co provisions to the NTD only. Everything downstream — Cat6 tails to bedrooms, offices, TV points and Wi-Fi AP positions — is customer-side cabling and is either the builder's responsibility (if in contract) or the homeowner's.

When should the cabler come to site?

Once the roof is on, frame is up and before plaster is fixed — the standard 'pre-plaster rough-in' window. Book Netlink at least 5 working days ahead so we can coordinate with sparky, plumber and framing carpenter.

What documentation should the builder hand over at PCI?

A cabling report showing outlet locations, tested-and-tagged Cat6 runs, NBN lead-in specification, MDF/rack location and a copy of the ACMA Registered Cabler's certificate of compliance. Netlink issues these as part of every commissioned job.

Book Netlink for a rough-in. Send us the plans and we'll come back with a scoped quote you can share with the client. Call **1300 890 470**, email info@thenetlink.com.au, or visit thenetlink.com.au/book.