

SABRENet

20 Years of Connecting South Australia

Powering research, education
and innovation since 2005



20
year anniversary

The Network for Innovation, Education and Research

SABRENet Ltd acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and economic connection, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We especially honour the Kaurna Elders of the Adelaide Plains upon whose land SABRENet Ltd operates.





Paul Sherlock
Chair

For 20 years, SABRENet has quietly supported South Australia's progress. What began as a solution for universities has grown into essential infrastructure for research, education and innovation across the state.

It has been a privilege to be part of this journey. SABRENet's success has always come down to clarity of purpose, strong governance and a shared belief that connectivity is critical to our future.



Sandra Vallance
Chief Executive Officer

SABRENet may not always be visible, but its impact is everywhere.

Over the past two decades, it has enabled breakthroughs, supported collaboration and helped organisations grow and connect globally.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on ensuring South Australia has the infrastructure it needs to embrace emerging technologies and continue to innovate with confidence.



Ralph Leonard
CEO 2012-2019

When we started SABRENet, we knew South Australia needed better infrastructure to compete.

We didn't know exactly what it would become, but we knew it mattered.

Twenty years on, it has delivered more than we could have imagined, and it continues to play a critical role in the state's future.

“ We needed infrastructure that would allow South Australia to compete nationally and globally.

RALPH LEONARD



The Beginning

A Vision for Something Better

SABRENet was born out of necessity and vision. In the early 2000s, the connectivity available to South Australian universities and research institutions simply was not sufficient. Broadband wasn't readily available at a quality or price that was sustainable, leaving researchers and educators without the capacity they needed.

A small group of determined South Australians saw that this limitation was holding the state back. Rather than waiting for a commercial solution, they made a bold decision to create their own. It was a practical response to a real problem, grounded in collaboration and a shared belief that South Australia could do better.

From the outset, the ambition extended beyond simply improving internet speeds. The goal was to create infrastructure that would support long-term growth in education, research and innovation. It was about ensuring that South Australia could compete nationally and globally, and that its institutions would not be left behind as the digital world accelerated.

This early vision was both simple and powerful. It recognised that connectivity was not just a technical requirement, but a foundational enabler of knowledge, collaboration and economic development.

Photos top to bottom, left to right:

1. Professor Denise Bradley, Paul Sherlock, Hon. Julie Bishop, James Tizard, Professor Joan Cooper, Professor James McWha. Official Launch, Mawson Lakes.
2. Paul Sherlock, Clive Stein, Chris Ferguson, Eddy Lee, James Tizard, Clive Martis, Matthew Veitch. Official Launch, Mawson Lakes.
3. Contract signing. SABRENet and Amcom representatives. November 2005.
Back: Matthew Veitch, James Tizard, Clive Martis, Mark Legg. Middle: Carolyn Anderson
Front: Clive Stein and Paul Sherlock
4. Premier Mike Rann and Hon. Julie Bishop launching SABRENet. Official Launch, Mawson Lakes.

Year	Milestone	Total Sites	Cumulative Network Investment
2005	SABRENet Ltd founded and \$8M secured to fund the construction of the SABRENet network		\$2.7M
2007	Major university/research precincts connected. expansion to schools, TAFE and hospitals commences	~50 sites	\$7.7M
2010	\$1m Northern Schools project to connect 7 schools	~70 sites	\$11.9M
2014	Asset Exchange Agreement with City of Adelaide and Department for Infrastructure and Transport	~104 sites	\$14.4M
2017	GigCity launch; cultural institutions added	~200 sites	\$18.7M
2020	GigCity extended to 30 June 2024	~240 sites	\$23.2M
2021	Customer Satisfaction Review identifying a 92% Net Promoter score		\$23.4M
2023	GigCity extended to 30 June 2026. Asset Exchange Agreement established with Electranet		\$25.1M
2024	Diversity to YourDC Edinburgh Parks		\$27.4M
2025	20th Year Anniversary	~330+ sites	\$29.2M

Year	Data Centre Connections
2007	Equinox DC and Glenside DC
2013	Adam Data Centre
2017	Intervolve DC
2018	Internode Franklin Street and YourDC Hawthorn
2020	Colocity DC
2024	Diversity to YourDC Edinburgh Parks and DCI Data Centre
2025	NextDC A1

Footnote: The cumulative network investment has grown through SABRENet's participant members and non-participant customers adding new connections and capacity to the SABRENet network year on year.



Leadership and Momentum

Building on Strong Foundations

SABRENet's success has been built on strong foundations, and it continues to evolve through leadership and collaboration.

Since joining as CEO in 2019, Sandra Vallance has brought new energy and focus to the organisation. With a strong emphasis on engagement and communication, she has helped ensure that SABRENet's role is better understood, while continuing to strengthen its core operations, particularly in systems and data governance.

Her leadership reflects the organisation's broader approach: practical, collaborative and forward-looking. By building on the work of previous leaders, including Ralph Leonard and James Tizard, SABRENet has continued to grow while staying true to its original purpose.

The contributions of the Board, partners and extended team have also been central to this success. From technical experts and contractors to universities and government agencies, SABRENet is the result of many people working together over two decades.

This collective effort has created an organisation that is both resilient and adaptable, capable of responding to new challenges and opportunities.

Photos from SABRENet 20th Anniversary celebration, top to bottom:

1. Adelaide Town Hall
2. Adelaide Town Hall
3. Sandra Vallance and Paul Sherlock
4. Professor Chris Brebner, Sandra Vallance & Professor David Lewis

A Different Model

Built for Public Good

From the beginning, SABRENet was designed differently.

As a not-for-profit organisation, it was structured so that every dollar earned would be reinvested into the network. This ensured that the focus remained on long-term value rather than short-term returns, and that the benefits would continue to flow back into the South Australian community.

This decision was not only philosophical, but practical. Securing charitable status protected the organisation from significant tax liabilities and preserved critical early funding. It also ensured that SABRENet would remain independent and focused on its purpose, rather than being vulnerable to commercial acquisition.

Over time, this model has proven to be one of SABRENet's greatest strengths. It has enabled steady growth, continuous reinvestment, and the ability to respond to changing needs across education, research and industry.

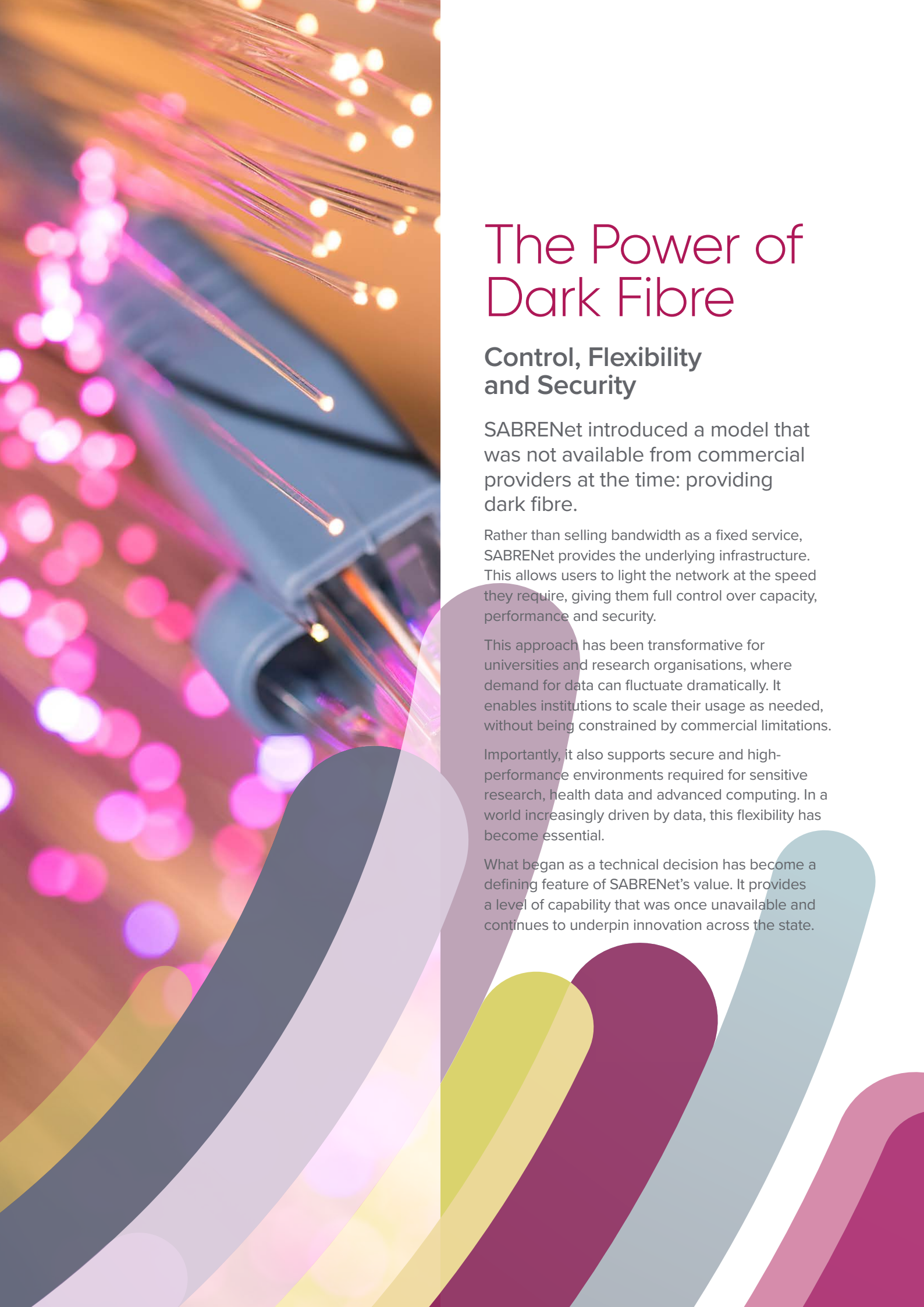
The University sector in Adelaide would not be able to achieve its approach to connectivity without SABRENet. SABRENet delivers outstanding value which differentiates and enhances capability of the participants to achieve so much more than it's peers interstate. The collaboration which underpins SABRENet delivers enduring strategic, financial and capability benefits.

Every connection, every extension of the network, and every partnership has been guided by a consistent principle: connectivity in service of the public good.

A photograph showing three students in a computer lab. They are all wearing white VR headsets and are focused on their screens, with their hands on keyboards. The student in the foreground has dreadlocks. The student in the middle is laughing. The student in the background is also wearing a headset. The lab has several computer monitors and keyboards on desks.

“The decision to reinvest into the network probably determined whether SABRENet could exist as it does today.

PAUL SHERLOCK



The Power of Dark Fibre

Control, Flexibility and Security

SABRENet introduced a model that was not available from commercial providers at the time: providing dark fibre.

Rather than selling bandwidth as a fixed service, SABRENet provides the underlying infrastructure. This allows users to light the network at the speed they require, giving them full control over capacity, performance and security.

This approach has been transformative for universities and research organisations, where demand for data can fluctuate dramatically. It enables institutions to scale their usage as needed, without being constrained by commercial limitations.

Importantly, it also supports secure and high-performance environments required for sensitive research, health data and advanced computing. In a world increasingly driven by data, this flexibility has become essential.

What began as a technical decision has become a defining feature of SABRENet's value. It provides a level of capability that was once unavailable and continues to underpin innovation across the state.

Expanding the Network

Connecting South Australia to the world

What began with universities quickly expanded into something much broader.

Today, SABRENet connects hundreds of sites across South Australia, linking schools, TAFEs, hospitals, research institutions and innovation precincts. It forms a critical part of the state's digital infrastructure, connecting local organisations to national and global networks.

Through its partnership with AARNet, SABRENet provides access to international research networks, enabling South Australian researchers to collaborate with peers around the world. This global connectivity has become essential, as research increasingly relies

on shared data, distributed teams and access to specialised facilities.

At the same time, the network has supported local collaboration. By linking institutions across the state, SABRENet has helped to foster a more connected ecosystem.

What makes this network unique is not just its scale, but its purpose. It was built to serve education and research, and it continues to evolve in response to the needs of those communities.



Research is a
global team sport.
PAUL SHERLOCK

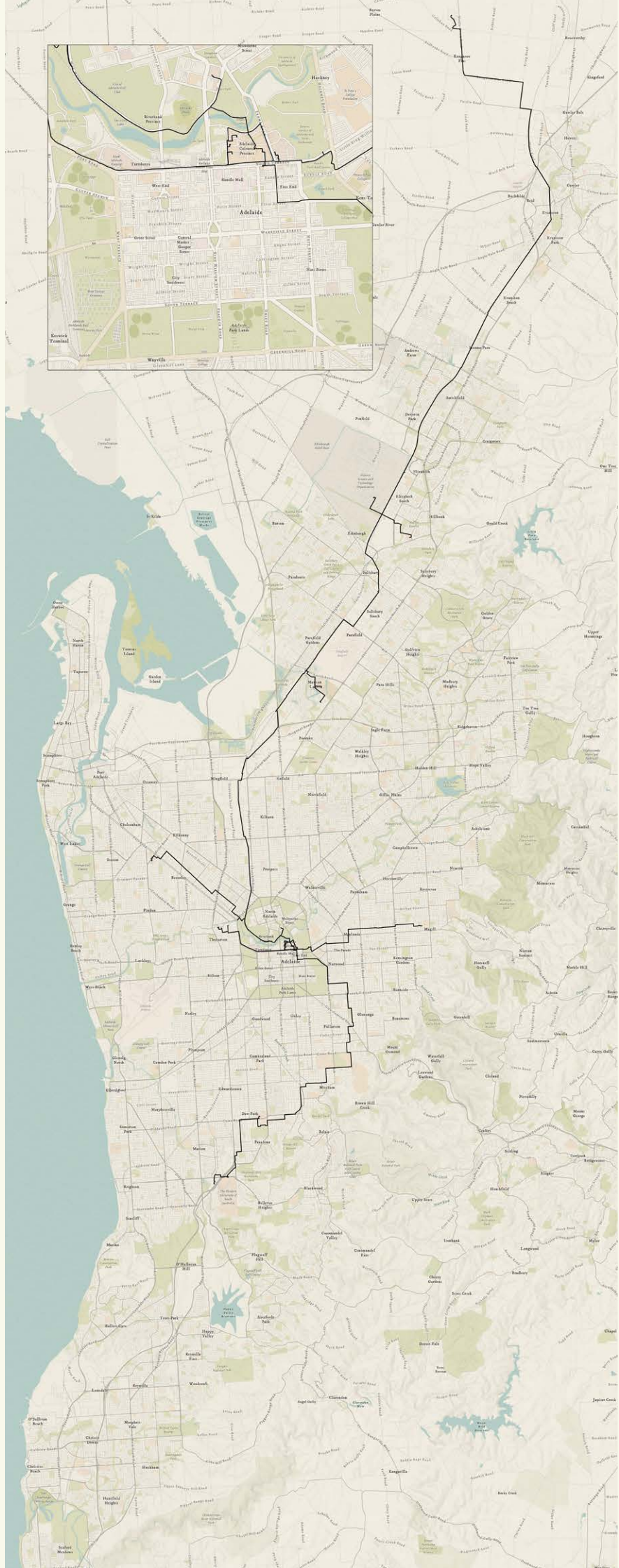
South Australian Broadband Research and Education Network 2005

The early SABRENet build was large, fast, and strategically targeted:

- Over 110 km of underground fibre-optic cable, making it the second-largest underground network in Adelaide after Telstra.
- The focus on universities, hospitals, TAFE, and research precincts shows the network's purpose: enabling high-bandwidth scientific collaboration.

Comparison: Initial Rollout vs. SABRENet Today

- Network Size:
 - Initial: ~110 km underground fibre
 - Today: 500+ km underground fibre across metropolitan Adelaide area
- Connected Sites:
 - Initial: Universities, major hospitals, TAFE, DSTO, CSIRO
 - Today: 200+ schools, research labs, innovation precincts, councils, data centres, expanded health sites
- Purpose:
 - Initial: Solve research bandwidth market failure
 - Today: Large fibre only network across metropolitan Adelaide supporting research, education and innovation sectors

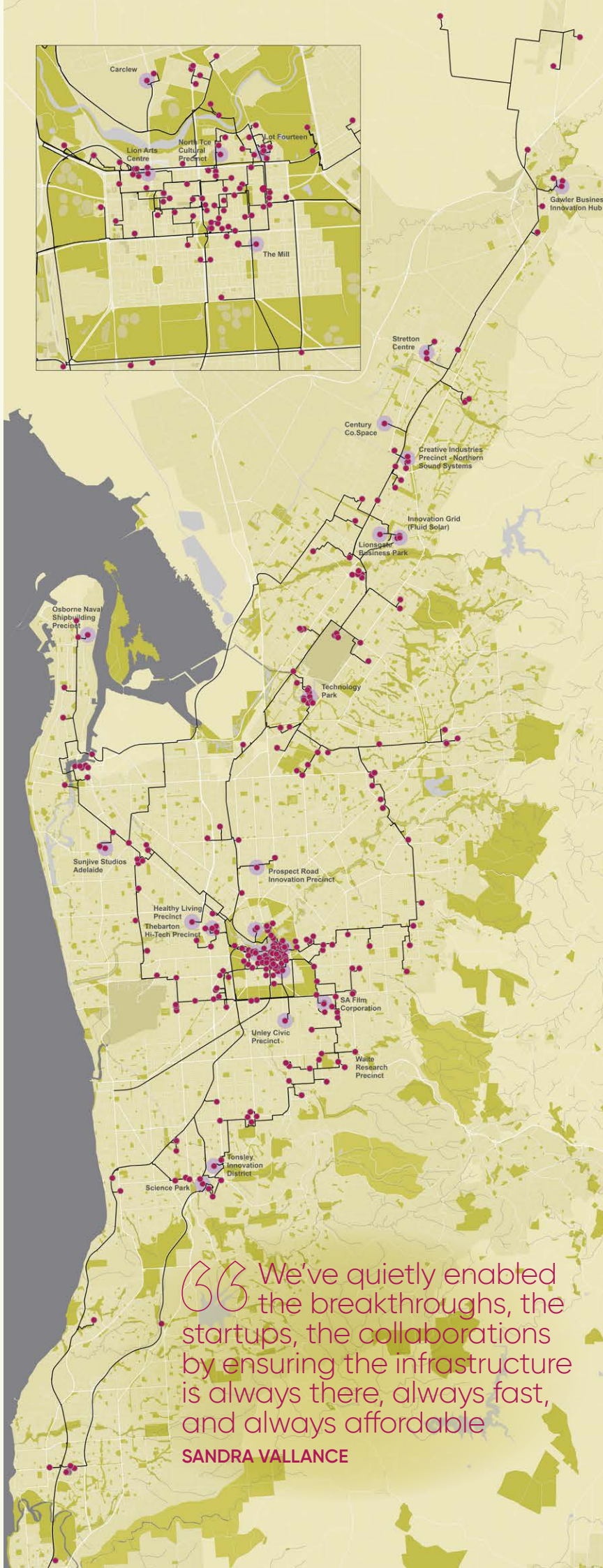


South Australian Broadband Research and Education Network 2026

- Almost 500km of fibre optic cable.
- Connects more than 355 locations and 650 organisations across Adelaide.
- A digital backbone enabling global research collaboration, innovation and world-class education.
- 21 Innovation Precincts connected to GigCity.
- Essential for the future: fibre supporting AI, quantum research and smart cities.
- A not-for-profit company owned by Flinders University, Adelaide University and the Government of South Australia.
- Every dollar is reinvested for public good; not paid as dividends.
- A true South Australian success story quietly powering South Australia's innovation engine for two decades.

“We’ve quietly enabled the breakthroughs, the startups, the collaborations by ensuring the infrastructure is always there, always fast, and always affordable”

SANDRA VALLANCE





Impact in Education

Empowering the Next Generation

Education has always been at the heart of SABRENet's purpose.

Across South Australia, students and educators benefit from high-speed, reliable connectivity that supports modern teaching and learning. Digital classrooms, online collaboration tools and immersive technologies are now standard, and SABRENet provides the infrastructure that makes this possible.

Programs such as Trinity College's SPARK curriculum demonstrate how connectivity can transform education, enabling students to engage with real-world problems and develop skills for the future.

Beyond schools, SABRENet supports universities and TAFEs in delivering advanced teaching, research and training. It enables access to global resources, supports remote learning, and facilitates collaboration between institutions.

This investment in connectivity is ultimately an investment in people. By empowering students, educators and researchers, SABRENet is helping to build the skills and knowledge that will shape South Australia's future.

“Having the speed and reliability of SABRENet has enabled us to think even bigger.”

TRINITY COLLEGE

Advancing Research

Driving Discovery and Collaboration

Research has been at the core of SABRENet's mission since day one.

Created to connect South Australia's research institutions to national and international networks, SABRENet provides the high-capacity infrastructure that enables collaboration, discovery and innovation. Universities, teaching hospitals, government agencies and research organisations rely on fast, secure and reliable connectivity to share knowledge, access specialist facilities and work with partners around the world.

As research becomes increasingly data-intensive, the need for high-performance connectivity continues to grow. SABRENet supports the transfer of large datasets, access to advanced computing resources and the real-time collaboration required for modern research across fields including health, defence, agriculture, environmental science and advanced technology.

The network has enabled researchers to undertake ambitious projects that would otherwise be impossible. At Adelaide University's Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing, researchers developing the world-leading Cryogenic Sapphire Oscillator (CSO) or "Sapphire Clock", have used SABRENet dark fibre to test the distribution of ultra-precise timing signals across long distances while maintaining exceptional accuracy. It is one example of how SABRENet's infrastructure helps turn groundbreaking ideas into real-world outcomes.

For 20 years, SABRENet has provided the foundation for world-class research in South Australia, ensuring local researchers can collaborate globally, push the boundaries of knowledge and pursue solutions to some of society's most complex challenges.



SABRENet is the fibre optic network linking South Australian research facilities with the rest of the world.

SANDRA VALLANCE

Enabling Innovation

Precincts, Startups and Growth

SABRENet has played a quiet but critical role in the development of South Australia's innovation ecosystem.

Precincts such as Tonsley and Lot Fourteen have become hubs for startups, scale-ups and global businesses. Behind the scenes, SABRENet provides the fast, reliable connectivity that allows these organisations to operate at scale and compete internationally.

Through the GigCity program, SABRENet's infrastructure now supports hundreds of businesses, enabling them to collaborate, access cloud services, and manage large volumes of data. This has helped position South Australia as a competitive destination for innovation and technology-driven industries.

The impact of this connectivity extends beyond individual businesses. It contributes to job creation,

economic growth and the development of new industries within the state.

While often unseen, SABRENet has been a key enabler of this transformation, supporting the shift from a traditional manufacturing economy to a modern, innovation-driven one.

“Those innovation precincts wouldn't be anywhere near as successful without SABRENet.

PAUL SHERLOCK



Looking Ahead

The Next 20 Years

As SABRENet enters its third decade, its role is more important than ever.

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing and health informatics all depend on fast, reliable connectivity. Fibre infrastructure is no longer optional, it is essential.

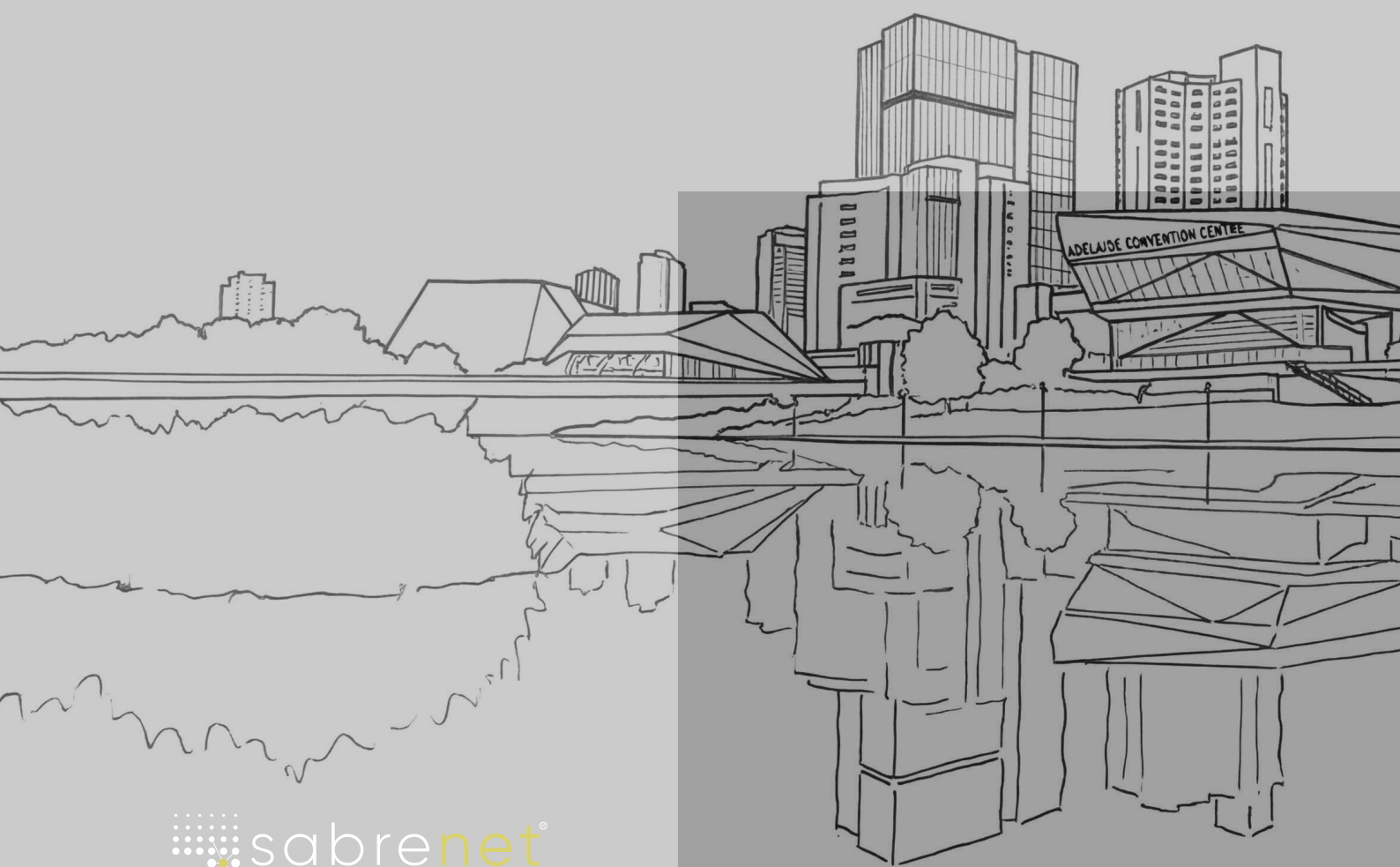
SABRENet is committed to ensuring that South Australia remains connected and competitive in this rapidly evolving environment. By continuing to invest in its network and partnerships, it will support the next generation of innovation and discovery.

A key part of this future focus is investment in people. New initiatives such as the SABRENet Travel Grants will support higher degree research students, helping them connect with global peers and contribute to their fields. This reflects SABRENet's ongoing commitment to education, talent development and the future of innovation.

As it looks ahead, SABRENet remains guided by the same purpose that defined its beginnings: removing barriers to connectivity and enabling South Australia to thrive.

“AI doesn't work without fibre.”
PAUL SHERLOCK





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