



Keynote - CommsDay Summit - June 2, 2026

Anthony Shiner - Chief Customer Officer, Consumer.

"Making Life Work: How Optus Is Being Rebuilt Around Customers"

1. [Acknowledgements]

Thank you Joe.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land we're meeting on today, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

Stephen also wanted me to acknowledge Grahame Lynch and the CommsDay team...

Not just for bringing us together today, but for the role you play in shaping, scrutinising, and strengthening this industry, particularly as you mark this the 25th Summit.

And congratulations also to all the Edison Award finalists - we look forward to celebrating the winners and the grinners later tonight.

Your achievements reflect the innovation and ambition that continues to drive this sector forward.

And finally, to our many partners, colleagues, collaborators and competitors across the industry - thank you for the work you do every day to keep Australians connected.

There are a lot of familiar faces here - but for those who don't know me I'm Anthony Shiner, I'm the Optus Chief Customer Officer.



I've been in this industry for more than 30 years and started my working life selling Optus mobile phones in a Kmart in downtown Bankstown. Since then I've worked in telco in many parts of the world.

I'm back now to where it all began and I couldn't be more excited to be part of this fantastic sector, in this fantastic country, and more on that later.

2. [Scene set]

Let me start with what I think Australians expect from their telecommunications providers these days!

Australians expect reliable connectivity as a minimum.

They expect resilience as a baseline.

To have confidence that their telco services will perform as advertised.

That their data will be protected, and that when they need us most, we'll be there.

They don't want to call us often and, when they do, they need to solve it.

Those expectations are all completely reasonable.

I had a conversation with a customer just last week and he said: I just want to get what I've paid for and not have to deal with anyone. And that about sums it up.

Delivering on that promise is broadly what I want to talk about this morning.

So, this **won't** be a sermon from the mount - a technical briefing.

It **won't** be a postulation of what everyone else should be doing.



But it will be a conversation around trust, reliability, and around change at a time when Australians expectations are shifting rapidly.

Our world is already changing incredibly quickly - and we're about to be impacted dramatically by the next technology shift - AI, and specifically agentic AI - is about to become central to the lives for every Australian.

And we must be ready, not just as an enabler and provider, but to be a *leader* in introducing, building and maintaining trust in that new technology ecosystem.

So today I want to focus on three areas:

First, **Accountability**: because the trust we need to rebuild starts with credibility, and credibility starts with owning what's happened.

Not explaining it away. Not softening it.

Owning it - clearly and openly. And that's where transparency comes in.

Because when trust is damaged, people expect to see the full picture - what went wrong, why it mattered, and what's changing as a result.

That is the starting point for rebuilding trust. It's exactly where we've begun at Optus and why *We're on it*.

The second thing is **Transformation**: rapidly changing customer expectations, coupled with a number of serious failures at Optus, made it obvious that incremental changes would not be enough.

So, we've fundamentally rethought how Optus works - and that's what sits behind our Transformation Strategy.

It's a practical plan - actions, not words - to rebuild the business - to simplify, to strengthen, and to deliver a better experience for customers.

Improvements that customers actually *feel*.

There's a lot of work happening behind the scenes - and I want to take you through some of the key elements of that today.

My third point is around the **Challenge** for the sector: because the pace and scale of change we're seeing is unlike anything we've experienced before.

It's coming faster. And reaching further.

And it's becoming more central to how Australians live, work and connect.

A tech commentator said recently that we are about to enter the fastest shift in human efficiency in the history of mankind.

Let that sink in - the fastest shift in human efficiency in our history.

Which means this is no longer just about how we compete with each other.

It's how we *collectively* meet the responsibility that comes with being providers of critical national infrastructure.

Because what we do now - and how well we get it right - matters more than ever.

It will underpin how Australia is positioned for the future.

It's exciting and exhilarating.

It's absolutely complex. And it's accelerating.

But while it already feels incredibly fast today, it matters because what we do now will shape how customers experience everything in the future.

What a buzz! What an industry!

But before we talk about the future, we need to be clear about the past.

So let me start where we must – and that's with accountability.

3. [Accountability as the starting point]:

It is hardly a secret that over recent years, Optus has experienced a number of serious incidents.

None of these events met the standards we set for ourselves.

And they certainly did not meet the expectations of our customers or the broader Australian community.

We take full responsibility for that.

We let our customers down - and when trust is damaged, it can't be restored through words alone.

It has to be rebuilt through *real* action and through *real* changes that customers can see and *feel* over time.

And that has guided our response.

Following the September outage, the Optus Board commissioned an independent review led by Dr Kerry Schott.

It was candid, it was confronting and it was detailed.

It identified clear gaps - in process, in accountability, and in how decisions were made under pressure.

The Board and management accept every finding in that report - in full.



We released the report publicly - again in full - because a big part of being accountable is also being transparent.

Just as important is action.

So, since the release of the report we have strengthened leadership across network operations, security, risk and compliance.

We have improved how issues are detected, escalated and resolved.

We have introduced stronger monitoring of critical services, including Triple Zero.

And we have changed how we support customers during incidents - with clearer, more proactive communication when it matters the most.

We have also taken firm action where misconduct has occurred - resetting incentives, separating sales from service, and strengthening protections for customers, particularly those experiencing vulnerability including some of our First Nations customers.

We have also bought back our licensee retail stores and re-trained all our frontline staff.

Across the organisation we focussed on addressed root causes - simplifying systems, clarifying accountabilities, and strengthening governance.

At the same time, we are realistic about the environment we operate in.

Telecommunications networks are complex.

Outages and incidents can, and will, still occur.

What must be different though - and what *is* different today at Optus - is how we detect and respond when they do occur.



And this work doesn't sit alongside our Transformation Strategy - it defines it.

Our focus is not revisiting what went wrong, it is on demonstrating what has changed, showing that 'we're on it' - and that we want to turn it around.

4. [The work of change - transforming Optus]:

Optus is changing for a simple reason - because our customers expect it.

And because Australians deserve real choice, just like they did in 1992 when Optus launched.

So, we've put a clear plan in place – we call it our **Transformation Strategy**.

It's not a document.

It's not a set of ambitions, it's fleshed out, it has goals, it has ambitions but - most importantly - it has clear plan on how we going to achieve it.

It's a program to rebuild Optus - and to fix what matters.

Because we had reached a point where incremental change wasn't enough.

Complexity had crept in.

Across systems. Across products. Across how we worked.

It slowed us down.

It made us inconsistent.

And it got in the way of delivering for customers.

So, this is not about tweaking around the edges.



It's about fundamentally rebuilding how Optus works.

And it's focused on three things:

Strong basics.

Reliable connectivity.

Simpler systems.

Ultimately, it's about what customers feel.

We've also built this around a simple idea that our competition is not just other telcos.

It's the last best experience a customer has had anywhere.

Be that an Amazon transaction.

An Uber booking.

Or even a simple tap-and-go payment.

The common factor is that they are simple. Seamless. Frictionless.

And that changes the standard of what our customer expect out of every interaction.

So, what have we done?

Firstly, we're rebuilding the network and its resilience.

We've insourced around half of our network operations.

Key capabilities are now back onshore.



At the same time, we've kicked off a core modernisation program - strengthening the IP network that underpins Australia's fastest standalone 5G network.

And we've commenced embedding AI into the way the network runs - through AIOps, optimisation, and real-time performance management.

The outcome is simple: a network that is stronger, more stable, and built to perform when customers need it.

And you'll hear more tomorrow from Sri, Optus' CTO, particularly on what's happening in networks.

Secondly, we've changed our response to when things go wrong.

Today, escalation is tighter.

Decision-making is faster.

Visibility across the network is now more real-time.

So, when something goes wrong, we can respond quicker - and customers get clear answers, sooner.

And we've backed that up with people.

Up to 300 new Australian-based contact centre roles.

Sensitive functions, like Domestic Violence Services and billing escalation, have been brought back onshore - where they belong.

Because when something goes wrong, the experience matters just as much as the fix itself.

Thirdly, we've removed friction from the customer experience.

We've gone after one of the biggest issues in our industry - complexity being pushed onto customers.

Activation journeys are being simplified.

Processes are being cleaned up. Steps are being removed.

And we've been honest about where we've fallen short.

It pains me to hear of customers going on holiday overseas buying an eSIM from overseas...because it felt easier than activating one with us.

That's not just a bad experience.

It's a clear signal to us that we've got to get better at serving our customers.

And it's exactly what we're fixing. *We're on to it*

Fourthly, we're using technology to stay ahead, not catch up.

AI is no longer theoretical - it's operational.

It's helping us detect issues earlier.

It's predicting and resolving faults before customers feel them.

It's enabling us to equip our frontline teams with better tools.

Longterm means fewer issues, and faster resolution when they do arise.

Fifthly, we're strengthening safety and trust.

Because performance alone isn't enough anymore.

That means verified calling.

It means scam interception, and we've blocked 800 million attempts so far.

It means practical protections built into the customer experience.

Because trust in connectivity is also about feeling safe using it.

And finally, we're lifting standards across the board.

That means better support for vulnerable customers.

More support for small businesses.

And a real focus on a culture of Accountability.

Ownership.

And doing the basics right - every time.

Because the standard is simple:

Every decision. Every interaction. Every day.

Has to improve the customer experience.

Clearly, we're nowhere near finished.

But the Transformation Strategy gives us a clear path - and we're executing against it.

That's how we rebuild trust.

And *that's* how we rebuild confidence.

Not through what we say.

But through what we do.

And through how customers experience it.

Because when it comes to rebuilding Optus - we're on it.

But it's also clear that what customers expect of their telco providers isn't the responsibility of one company alone.

They extend across the entire sector.

And that brings me to my last point today, and the broader challenge in front of all of us.

5. [A challenge to the industry]:

Let me start with a few observations.

First - this is a fantastic industry to be part of.

I love this industry.

I actually started my career as an exercise scientist, but I switched to this remarkable industry over 30 years ago.

Why do I think it's remarkable?

Because we started as a nice-to-have, almost a luxury, and yet today, it's one of the most essential services in the lives of almost every Australian.

We are critical national infrastructure.

It's gone from most customers not even aware they were using basic technology to being across why they need 5G and specific services that benefit from faster speeds and latency.

It's an industry known for continuous and radical innovation and change - that's why I think it's remarkable.

Demand for what we provide is also going through the roof - and Australians are using *more* data, across *more* devices, for *more* parts of their lives than ever before.

And that is only accelerating.

Research presented by nbn shows the average Australian household already has around 25 connected devices - and that's expected to rise to more than 44 devices per household by the end of this decade.

At the same time, the next wave of technology - like agentic AI that I mentioned earlier - is moving into mainstream.

That will not be evolution. This will be revolution.

And it's happening on our watch.

That's incredibly exciting.

But it also tells you something important.

In just over a decade, connectivity has gone from something we used...
...to something we critically rely on, constantly, across every part of our lives.

And our sector sits right at the centre of that!

Which is why we need to be on it; and we're on it!

The Second point I'd like to make: there's a tension in our sector that's easy to overlook.

Customers are consuming exponentially more data - but in real terms, they're paying less for it.

Over the past decade, data usage has increased tenfold across the telecommunication sector but has become 10% smaller as a share of the household budget.

Let that sink in for a bit: customers are using 10 times more data but the relative spend in the household budget is 10% less.

Using more, spending less.

That is an extraordinary shift in value.

And it's sometime easy to forget we are part of what is probably the greatest transfer of value from industry to consumers this country has seen.

That's great for customers, but let's not forget we need to remain commercially viable as an industry.

In most sectors, more usage means higher costs.

But in ours, more usage has delivered more value.

We've built networks that do more, carry more, enable more and yet remain one of the lowest-growth items in the household wallet.

Striking the balance between quality future-proof products and services and keeping them within reach for the average Australian while ensuring we keep an industry viable is a challenge that confronts all of us.

The third point I want to make is that for all that progress, our **reputation** as a sector is nowhere near where it should be or needs to be.

In fact, in many cases, it's the opposite.

Recent Reptrak data shows the telecommunications sector in Australia is way down the list when it comes to reputation - ranking 17th out of 33 industries.

We should acknowledge that plainly.

At Optus, we also acknowledge that we have played a significant role in that.



It's no secret that in recent years, we've experienced a number of serious incidents.

Those events had real consequences for customers and rattled faith in the industry, but we've not been alone.

And they have contributed to a decline in trust - not just in Optus, but in the sector more broadly.

We understand that.

We accept it. And we own it.

And as I explained earlier, we are systematically and energetically addressing every one of our issues.

But trust in the telco sector is not something any one company alone creates on its own or can fix on its own.

Because the rising expectations of customers, we've been talking about - reliability, safety, trust - don't sit with any provider exclusively.

They sit with *all* of us.

We're only going to be as strong as our weakest link.

In line with Professor Owen's comments remarks yesterday, rebuilding confidence is a shared responsibility.

And that creates an opportunity - to work together in ways that genuinely improve outcomes for customers, for the community, and for the country.

One very practical and important opportunity is device readiness.

One of the things the Triple Zero incident brought into sharp focus is this: it's not enough for the network to just work.

We also have to be confident that the device in a customer's hand will work when they need it most - *and* that they understand that before the moment arrives.

We are now operating in an environment where telcos are expected to identify device risks, communicate clearly with customers about them, and particularly when it comes to emergency access.

When handsets are being purchased locally and internationally, it is not something one provider can solve in isolation.

It requires better visibility of device capability across the sector.

It requires working closely with device manufacturers, regulators and policy makers to providing clearer, more consistent information for customers.

And a shared commitment to act when risks are identified, not just by one provider, but across the sector.

Because when it comes to something like Triple Zero, the standard is simple - it either works, or it doesn't. And our shared accountability and our responsibility to Australians is that it *must* work!

There is **no place** for competition is this.

Instead, it's a place for collaboration - across network operators, device manufacturers, regulators and policymakers - to make sure customers are informed, protected, and supported.

And if we get this right, it won't just improve outcomes for customers - it will help to rebuild confidence in the role our sector plays in people's everyday lives.

Because ultimately, that's what's at stake.



And that responsibility sits with all of us. And it's a responsibility we should all wear as a badge of honour.

Because this industry - together - needs to be on it.

I can assure you at Optus – *We're on it.*

[Closing: The standard going forward]:

That's a lot to think about so let me finish by bringing everything back to what matters most: the customer.

Not "customer" as an abstract collective – a single customer.

Last week I received an email from a customer - and I won't name them, but they live in rural Australia.

Now I get a lot of emails as the Chief Customer Officer, and I make a point of reading each and every one and responding to each and every one.

A lot of them disappoint me, and drive me to be better, but this one was different.

This was a customer wanting to tell me they'd walked into one of our stores with an issue and they had expected it to be a hassle. They'd expected it to be a negotiation. They were expecting not to be heard.

Instead, they'd walk out feeling like they'd received good old-fashion service. That they'd had their problem solved quickly and cleanly.

I can't tell you how refreshing that was to hear.

The staff had done exactly what they'd been retrained to do: they listened, they absorbed, and they acted.



And I thought if that's the progress we can make in six months, imagine where we'll be in another six months, or 12 months, or five years.

And that's what this is all about.

It's not about programs. It's not about strategies.

It's about moments like *that*.

Because that experience - *one* customer, *one* interaction - that's how trust is rebuilt.

It's not in a speech.

It's not in a plan.

It's in the tens of thousands of interactions; we do each and every single day.

And at Optus, we know we have to earn that.

Earn it through the way our network performs.

Earn it for the way we show up when something goes wrong.

Earn it through how easy we are to deal with when customers need us.

Because the standard is not what we say it is - the standard is what customers experience.

And that's the standard we're working towards - every day, every interaction, every decision, every step of the way.

That's why I can say with confidence, **we are on it**.

Thanks for listening and I hope you enjoy the rest of the Summit.

<ends>