

VOICE OVER CLOUD · ORIGINS · 2026

We Named Voice over Cloud. Here Is What We Meant

Two businesses could both accurately say they were on VoIP while running completely different things: one with a box in a cupboard and one with nothing on site at all.

The term was coined in 2017 to fix a vocabulary failure that was costing customers money. VoIP describes *how* voice travels, packets instead of an electrical signal. It says nothing about *where* the system lives, and by the mid 2010s that gap was hiding an enormous difference between a business with an exchange in a cupboard and a business with nothing on site at all. **Hosted PBX was the nearest existing phrase and it undersold the change**, because it implied a traditional exchange had simply been moved to somebody else's rack.

■ The short version

Business A	Business B	
Transport	SIP trunks, packets	SIP, packets
Where the call control runs	A box in the comms cupboard	A provider's platform
Adding a staff member	Book a technician, wait, pay an hourly rate	A field in a portal, ninety seconds
When the building loses power	Inbound calls stop	Calls keep arriving on mobiles and laptops
Concurrent call limit	A specific number somebody knows	Nobody knows, because nobody provisioned it
What happens in three years	The hardware leaves vendor support	Nothing

■ Also worth knowing

Property	Consequence still visible today
One line carried exactly one call	Businesses learned that capacity is a physical thing you buy and own. Many still size for peak and pay all year.
Call control lived in the carrier's exchange	You ordered features from a list. The expectation that a phone system is something done <i>to</i> you rather than <i>by</i> you starts here.
Every feature was metered and billed separately	Call waiting, forwarding and voicemail as individual line items. The industry's instinct to unbundle and re-bill features was learned in this era and never fully unlearned.
The line was powered from the exchange	A corded phone worked in a blackout. This is the one genuine advantage no later generation replicates for free, and it deserves to be conceded rather than argued away.

The assumption that outlived the technology

That last point did the most lasting damage, and it was cultural rather than technical. An entire generation of Australian businesses learned that **the phone system is a fixed asset you do not touch**. You still hear it in the way people describe their own call flows, apologetically, as something inherited. When a business tells us it cannot change how calls are routed, the constraint is almost never technical any more. It is a habit formed in an era that has ended.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ Who came up with the term Voice over Cloud?
- ☐ What is the difference between Voice over Cloud and VoIP?
- ☐ Is hosted PBX the same as Voice over Cloud?
- ☐ How can I test whether a provider really offers Voice over Cloud?
- ☐ Why did call quality become the customer's problem when voice moved to packets?
- ☐ Does moving to a cloud phone system mean I lose the ability to call during a power cut?
- ☐ The copper network is being retired, what are my actual options?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 663 222** or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.