



Media Release

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Broadband speeds and performance leaving consumers disappointed

Research from the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network ([ACCAN](#)) has found that broadband speeds and performance levels are leaving consumers disappointed with their services. The lack of reliable information on broadband quality for consumers to use when choosing a plan means that it is difficult to make the right choices.

[ACCAN's survey](#) found that quality is the third most important factor for consumers in choosing a broadband service, behind price and monthly data allowance. However, consumers appear to be confused by the market. Respondents were split in their opinion on whether providers differ in the level of quality they offer, with 58 per cent of participants agreeing with the statement "You get the same speeds at home as advertised in your plan."

"This confusion and lack of information inevitably leads to disappointment with services, as demonstrated by nearly 70 per cent of respondents saying they had unsatisfactory experiences with their broadband services," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "The top reason given was slow speeds at some times of the day. This indicates that a consumer's experience of broadband services is limited by factors which are outside of their control or visibility."

Broadband performance is often thought to mean the speed at which information is received, but there are a range of factors that contribute to the overall performance. Essential consumer applications require high performing broadband to work properly. For example, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services require a reliable connection with limited delays and distortions, but not a very high download speed. Performance is also affected by the equipment used by consumers and by the commercial decisions and the technology used by service, network and content providers.

The ACCC's [broadband monitoring and performance pilot program](#) last year demonstrated that it is possible to test and verify speed claims. ACCAN is calling on the Federal Government to support an independent broadband monitoring program that will fill the current gap in consumer information.

"Plans are commonly advertised on headline speed claims which may only be achievable in ideal test conditions and not what consumers should expect to obtain in real world everyday use," added Ms Corbin. "Claims are qualified with an elusive list of factors that can affect performance, but this is difficult for consumers to engage with or apply to their service.

"If they are experiencing poor quality services, consumers may benefit from switching providers. However, it is almost impossible for the consumer to know whether this would be a good decision because information on

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The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

provider performance is not currently available to consumers. This leaves consumers with the choice to stay with their current provider or risk switching to another without any performance data assisting their decision.”

This issue is heightened with the promise of faster and better technologies and services over the NBN and superfast broadband networks. Consumers do not have the full range of information available to them. As a result they may not be choosing the best services to suit their needs or struggle to identify and rectify poor performance when it occurs.

“The quality of broadband services is becoming very important, particularly as more consumers move to the NBN, plans are offered on a range of speeds and consumers are using the internet for an increasing range of services,” added Ms Corbin.

ACCAN will be highlighting the need for broadband monitoring information to be available, along with a possibility of a new Customer Service Guarantee and greater affordability measures with Members of Parliament next week in our Meet the People Forum to be held 23 February in Canberra.

For more information on the factors that can affect internet quality, check out our article and infographic on [what affects the quality of broadband](#).

Download the full survey results on [our website](#). The survey was completed by Galaxy Research in January 2016 with 1,011 respondents which were representative of the Australian population.

For more information, contact Luke Sutton on luke.sutton@accan.org.au or 0409 966 931. For the latest updates, follow ACCAN on [Twitter](#) or like us on [Facebook](#).

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