

# Independent Broadband Performance Information

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## What is broadband performance?

Broadband is a fast communication data connection. Its performance is judged by its efficiency to transfer information. Performance is often thought of as the speed at which information is received, but there are a range of other factors affecting broadband performance. Essential consumer applications require high performing broadband to work properly. For example Voice over IP services require a reliable connection with limited delays and distortions, but not a very high download speed.

## What affects performance levels?

Many factors can affect performance levels. Equipment used, and its position in the home, has an impact. Service providers, network providers and content providers also affect performance levels through their commercial decisions and the technology they use. These may limit consumer experiences as services are designed to be economical to deliver, not at a level which will satisfy all demand simultaneously.

## Overview of problem - there is no transparency currently available on the level of broadband performance in Australia

Plans are commonly advertised on headline speed claims which may only be achievable in ideal test conditions and are not what consumers should expect in real world everyday use. 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. This issue is heightened with nbn and the promise of faster and better technologies and services. 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. A knock on effect of this is likely to be reduced public trust in nbn and diminished pressure on the market to continually increase the level of broadband services in Australia.

## Consumer survey: the extent and the effects

In a recent survey we found:

- Quality and performance are important to consumers
- At the same time, there is a lack of consumer awareness of performance levels
- There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the actual performance of broadband services, with the top reason given as slow speeds at some times of the day.

## Potential Solution

Information is needed on broadband performance across networks, geographies and providers, which is independently tested, reflective of real consumer experience and produced in an easy to understand format. This will allow consumers to make informed choices on their broadband services.