



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)
"Access to Education"

Submission

to the
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

into the
Consultation for broadband speed claims

from the
Federal Council

of the
Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)
ICPA (Aust)

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The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia, ICPA (Aust), welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the ACCC *Broadband Speed Claims* discussion paper.

ICPA (Aust) is a voluntary, apolitical parent body dedicated to ensuring all geographically isolated students have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education. This encompasses the education of children from early childhood through to tertiary. The majority of member families of the Association reside in geographically isolated areas of Australia and all share a common goal of achieving equitable access to education for their children and the provision of services required to achieve this. Most of our members rely on satellite broadband due to their location for education, business and social use.

Most students and families living in rural Australia will not have access to the **nbn**[™] fibre optic cable and will be reliant on the fixed wireless or satellite networks for their e-learning through email and internet. Because the internet has become an essential commodity in our lives and learning, we need assurance from the Government and relevant companies that speed and quality of service will be paramount.

When selecting a retail broadband (home internet) plan, what information about service performance and broadband speed do you consider most helpful?

With the launch of the Sky Muster service people are excited that they are now able to access a faster and more reliable form of internet service. **Nbn** co state on their website what constitutes a light, medium and heavy user and the types of activities that each user could expect to utilise.

The Sky Muster service plans delivered by the individual retail service providers are divided into those delivering speeds of 12mbps/1mbps and 25mbps/5mbps. This is well publicised, as is the fact that customers can expect a much better service than they have been able to access previously on a satellite service.

Do you find it easy to compare the speed of different internet offers when choosing between internet service providers or particular plans?

All of the RSPs offering Sky Muster services state that they are able to offer a service of either 12 mbps /1 mbps or 25mbps/5mbps. However, there are many complaints that customers are not receiving the speeds that they signed up for.

Which type of information about broadband speed would make it easier to compare broadband services to meet your home internet needs?

Information about the average speed that is actually experienced over a certain timeframe or the likely speed that is to be expected during peak and off peak times would be beneficial. The provision of information on how to access and complete a speed test should be easily available for customers.

Would it help you choose a home internet service if speed and performance information was provided to you in a particular way?

Yes, a standard reporting form would be very beneficial to our members.

Overseas, some regulators are considering whether new rules should apply when a broadband service isn't as advertised or falls below expectations. Options being considered include automatic compensation and automatically allowing consumers to exit contracts. Do you think any of these options should be used in Australia? Why or why not?

Currently there are no penalties if the service provided by **nbn** and its RSPs do not meet defined minimum standard in performance. There have never been published any minimum standards for the performance of **nbn** services. Suitable penalties should be imposed if these standards are breached. A customer service guarantee for broadband speeds would be very useful.

When selecting a mobile service, is mobile broadband speed an important factor in your decision? Why or why not?

For our members that are able to access and utilise mobile broadband for the provision of education services, speed is important when selecting a service. Nevertheless, choice of provider or service is extremely limited in much of regional and remote Australia.