



Senator the Hon Helen Coonan

Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

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Key Analyst Report Slams OECD Broadband Rankings

The Minister for Communications Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, today welcomed a new report released today from key telecommunications analyst Market Clarity that shows Australia should be ranked much higher in the OECD broadband rankings.

The Market Clarity report provides a new and robust assessment of Australia's broadband performance.

By extrapolating subscription data across various statistical benchmarks, extensive modelling has re-cast Australia's ranking as 11th for total broadband subscribers, at ninth position if only broadband over 256kbps is measured and as high as a record sixth position globally if new statistical banding is adopted.

"Under no measure does the OECD's 16th position assessment stack up and once pulled apart by Market Clarity, the flaws are so obvious it's like comparing apples and pears.

"Labor's doomsday rhetoric on broadband has come back to haunt them as this latest report sinks their claim that Australia is a broadband backwater," Senator Coonan said.

"Market Clarity said today the OECD rankings were assessed by counting the number of Internet connections that were faster than just 64 Kbps.

"However, Australia does not consider Internet speeds slower than 256Kbps as broadband. Unlike many other countries Australia does not submit these slower Internet connections to the OECD.

"It's back to the drawing board for Labor and they will now have to come up with some new misleading data to criticise Australia's broadband standing," Senator Coonan said.

"There have been many broadband furrphies peddled by Labor and other groups with a vested interest in criticising our broadband performance.

"Labor's claim that Australia is ranked 25th in the world for broadband speeds is rubbish and comes from a five year old survey on international under sea communications cables. It has absolutely nothing to do with broadband speeds available to consumers.

"International cables are the very high capacity Internet pipes that run under-sea and connect Australia to the rest of the world. The 2002 survey did not refer to a subscriber's connection to the Internet via their service provider which is where individual broadband service speeds are determined.

“Either Labor does not know the difference between home broadband Internet and international undersea cables or they are deliberately misleading the Australian community to suit their needs.

“The facts are that 90 per cent of Australian premises can access speeds of between 2Mbps and 8Mbps and more than 50 per cent of metropolitan areas can access even faster speeds through ADSL2+ and cable broadband platforms.

“But Labor is desperately trying to justify spending nearly \$5 billion of taxpayer’s money on a network that the industry is prepared to fund itself.

“Both Telstra and the G9 have felt the need to take out full page advertisements telling the world they do not need taxpayer funds to build their fibre broadband network.”

“If Mr Rudd can’t see that wasting \$5 billion dollars on a fibre network that the industry wants to build on their own, then every taxpayer must ask, how can Labor possibly manage Australia’s trillion dollar economy?”

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