

# ACCC Broadband speeds claims - Industry guidance consultation

Vocus welcomes the opportunity to respond to the ACCC's consultation on proposed changes to its Broadband Speed Claims – Industry Guidance relating to presenting information to consumers about upload speeds. Vocus' portfolio of brands include dodo and iPrimus which cater to residential customers across Australia.

## **Providing typical busy period upload speed information in marketing**

The ACCC's view is that upload speeds have become more important to consumers' broadband experience as consumers have engaged in home-based work and study more consistently than has historically been the case.

The ACCC is considering a very substantive change to the Guidance to clearly state that RSPs should provide typical busy period upload speeds information in their broadband marketing for services provided over both fixed line and fixed wireless access networks.

Vocus does not support the ACCC's proposal that RSPs provide typical busy period upload speed information in marketing. We do not see any compelling reason to be required to provide this information. The significant cost and resources to implement the requirements outweighs the limited consumer benefit. Demand for upload speeds has shifted but not to the extent that there is contention in networks. Further, adding this representation to existing highly prescriptive marketing requirements may add to customer confusion.

*How does the busy period for upload speeds affect the service quality experienced by end-users, including on higher speed services?*

We are not seeing a reduction in service quality experienced by our customers during the busy period for upload speeds.

Vocus has symmetric trunks in its core network and the traffic demand from the customer as download traffic is multiple times higher than upload traffic. We dimension the network to support download traffic and this results in us being confident in having sufficient bandwidth (headroom) to cover customers' demand associated with upload traffic.

Unlike download speeds where the RSP can dimension its networks and provision CVC, Vocus does not have the same control over upload speed.

*Are there any significant barriers to RSPs providing typical busy period upload speed information?*

Vocus is very concerned about the cost, time and resources required to implement providing typical busy period upload speed information, in an already heavily regulated and highly competitive environment.

Significant investment in IT development would be required to provide this information to customers for limited consumer benefit and no improvement in customer experience.

Vocus' preliminary investigations indicate that there would be material work involved in providing typical busy period upload speed information for fixed-line broadband services. It would take at least 12 months to develop and test the extra testing capability in modems and the associated reporting to capture the results. This is not a trivial change. Some customer hardware would need to be replaced. Our initial inquiries indicate that not all our modems are capable of measuring upload speeds in line with our current methodology.

*What four-hour period in a 24 hour period is the busy period for upload speeds*

A review of our data showed that the busy period for upload speeds is in line with the busy period for download speeds.

*What constraints on a line or cell affect upload speeds in a way that deteriorates service quality experienced by an end-user?*

Vocus does not have any control on the constraints on a line or cell that may affect upload speeds. These technical and design constraints are within the control of NBN and we often do not have visibility of these issues.

**February 2022**