

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Department of Communications**

**Question No: 556**

**Program No. 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Broadband speeds**

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

On 30 May the *Washington Post* published an article under the heading ‘The FCC may consider a stricter definition of broadband in the Netflix age.’ The article stated ‘The FCC soon intends to solicit public comments on whether broadband should be redefined as 10 Mbps and up, or even as high as 25 Mbps and up, according to an agency official who asked not to be named because the draft request was not yet public.’

- a. What speed is used by the OECD to define broadband for its broadband statistics?
- b. Has Australia ever proposed that the definition be varied?
- c. Is the OECD considering varying the definition?
- d. Do the ACMA, ACCC and Department all use the same definition as the OECD?
- e. Does the Telecommunications Act define a “superfast carriage service” as one capable of 25 Mbps download?

**Answer:**

- a. The OECD collates data on broadband services according to a range of speed tiers, including services with a download speed of at least 256 kbps, in order to provide comparative metrics associated with broadband penetration and take-up.
- b. Australia has not proposed that the current OECD approach of using a range of speed metrics, be changed.
- c. The OECD’s use of multiple broadband speed metrics was implemented a number of years ago, and replaced the use of a single metric (256 kbps).
- d. The ACMA, ACCC and the Department have independently used, or referred to the OECD’s 256 kbps broadband speed metric. However, other characteristics, such as being “always-on” have also been used.
- e. Yes.