

# Australian Senate approves \$35B broadband network

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(AP) -- The Australian Senate on Friday approved legislation that enables the government to roll out a 36 billion Australian dollar (\$35 billion) high-speed national broadband network.

The Senate's final two-week session of the year was extended an additional day to vote on the enabling legislation that was opposed by the major opposition party. The legislation was passed 30 votes to 28.

It is expected to become law on Monday when it is voted on in the House of Representatives where key Greens party and independent lawmakers have pledged their support.

The fiber optic [broadband network](#) was a major campaign issue at August elections that returned Prime Minister Julia Gillard's center-left Labor Party with a minority government.

Opposition leader Tony Abbott's conservative Liberal Party had promised a smaller, slower AU\$6 billion network with a range of technologies including [optical fiber](#), wireless and DSL.

Independent lawmakers said their support for Labor's broadband plan was a major reason why they supported Labor to form government. With the support of three independents and a Greens party lawmaker, Labor commands a single seat majority in the 150-seat House of Representatives where parties form government.

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