

Telco consumers want more from their providers

ACCAN welcomes the Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) report *Financial hardship in the telco sector* released today. The ACMA's findings align with ACCAN research conducted earlier this year which shows that cost of living pressures are having a significant impact, with some consumers continuing to struggle to pay their telco bills.

"Cost of living issues aren't going away for the foreseeable future, so it's particularly concerning that over 40% of the Australian adult population are unaware that they can contact their telco provider for help managing their bills. This research shows that it is imperative that financial hardship policies are promoted by telcos and made easily accessible on their websites," said ACCAN CEO, Andrew Williams.

"It is a significant concern to ACCAN that as many as 2.4 million Australians had difficulty or struggled to pay their telco bill in the last 12 months. I would urge consumers who are struggling to pay their phone or internet bills, to speak with their telco, as they are obligated to help their customers and there is a range of options available for those experiencing financial difficulty," said Mr. Williams.

"It's also great to see the regulator highlighting some of the key issues for telco customers experiencing financial hardship. Issues such as customers not fully understanding their telco terms and conditions at the outset and, in some cases, a lack of transparency on how to find financial hardship information on telco websites are particularly concerning," said Mr. Williams

Some participants in the survey revealed that they were unhappy about telcos changing their plans and replacing them with ones customers hadn't signed up for. Others spoke about being sold plans with products that they either didn't need or didn't want such as two sim cards, exacerbating financial hardship for some.

"We want to see telcos doing better and the report provides an excellent summary of customer expectations. Put simply, customers want telcos to be transparent, honest, and more in tune with their needs," said Mr. Williams.

Both the [ACMA](#) and [ACCAN](#) have useful consumer education resources for consumers facing financial hardship on their websites.

Read the [ACMA media release](#)