



Australian Communications
Consumer Action Network

OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR

2015 - 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Who we are | 2 |
| Highlights | 3 |
| Chair report | 4 |
| CEO overview | 5 |
| Policy | 6 |
| Grants | 8 |
| Consumer awareness | 10 |
| Small business | 11 |
| International engagement | 12 |
| Engagement and outreach highlights | 13 |
| External representation | 14 |
| Consultation | 15 |
| Submissions | 16 |
| Publications | 18 |
| Research | 19 |
| Organisational members | 20 |

Australian Communications
Consumer Action Network
Limited (ACCAN)
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For the year ended 30 June 2016

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WHO WE ARE



OUR ORGANISATION

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation representing individuals, small businesses and not-for-profit groups as consumers of communications products and services. ACCAN focuses on goods and services encompassed by the converged areas of telecommunications, broadcasting, the internet and online services, including both current and emerging technologies.

The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

ACCAN team **Back row:** Kelly Lindsay, Narelle Clark, Rachel Thomas, Alan Howard, Luke Sutton, Kate Evans, Tanya Karliychuk.
Middle row: Paula Corvalan, Teresa Corbin, Una Lawrence, Yuriko Hoshi.
Front row: Wayne Hawkins, Beau the Guide dog, Richard Van Der Male, Xavier O'Halloran, Jeremy Riddle.

OUR MISSION

ACCAN's mission is to:

- Represent consumers and the public interest, with particular attention to the needs of consumers for whom the market is not working.
- Inspire, inform, enable and equip consumers to act in their own interests.
- Research emerging consumer communications issues to provide evidence-based policy advice.

OUR VALUES

As an organisation we will:

- Act with courage, integrity and independence.
- Operate openly, efficiently and effectively.
- Be accessible and inclusive, consistent with the high value we place on diversity.
- Recognise that building relationships with members, community groups, industry, regulators and government is critical to achieving our goals.
- Value volunteers, staff and members for their crucial role in our organisation.

HIGHLIGHTS

Website stats:

163,616
page views

Number of submissions:

30

Media releases:

24

Media mentions:

513

Hot Issues articles:

61



We posted

1,140 tweets
and achieved
969 retweets



Our FB posts had a combined reach of over

106,000

7

research projects commissioned and completed

6
Grants projects completed

Consumer education

Launched new website
 • Top tips for phones and internet • Satellite Guide • Mobile Black Spots Community Consultation Guide 2nd Edition

CHAIR REPORT

The 2015-16 financial year saw ACCAN delivering further beneficial outcomes for Australia's communications consumers, reinforcing the need to maintain a strong, united and adequately-resourced consumer voice in the industry.

As the voice of all consumers – general residential, small business and disadvantaged – ACCAN plays a crucial role in representing to Government and industry the ongoing and emerging communication concerns of all consumer sectors. Core to our success in doing so are the strong, productive relationships we have established with Government, regulators, industry groups, consumer organisations and individual industry stakeholders.

This year I was appointed to the Reference Group of Australian/International communications and regulatory experts established to advise Government on its Inquiry into the ACMA. This provided an invaluable opportunity to reinforce the importance of strong, telecommunications-specific consumer protection regulation and proactive regulator enforcement.

ACCAN's new member consultative framework proved hugely successful this year, with four highly-productive Advisory Forums convened in four different sectors – *General Member, Indigenous, Disability and Small Business*. These Forums catalysed lively debate, provided

Johanna Plante
Chairperson
ACCAN
Board



invaluable insights into the communications challenges facing sector members and highlighted a range of emerging issues and areas of focus for future work.

The ACCAN Board continues to provide clear strategic direction and solid professional governance to the organisation, with strong continuity in Board membership. This year saw only one change, with Len Bytheway stepping down and Chris Dodds joining the Board.

I warmly welcome Chris to the team and extend a heartfelt thank you to Len, both for his enormous contribution to ACCAN and the Board since 2009 and for being such a wonderfully supportive colleague since my appointment.

Lastly, but probably most importantly, let me acknowledge and applaud the hard work done by the ACCAN team, their unwavering commitment to consumer imperatives and their dedication to achieving consumer outcomes. But as everyone knows, there can only be such an exceptional team if there is an exceptional leader!

So in concluding I congratulate and give special thanks to the ACCAN CEO – *Teresa Corbin* – who makes it all happen. In recognition of this and the raft of her other consumer achievements over many, many years, Teresa was deservedly awarded the 2015 *Charles Todd Medal* for outstanding contribution to telecommunications in Australia.

CEO OVERVIEW

It has been another positive year for ACCAN with many improvements for consumers coming into place. We made 30 submissions, represented consumers on 27 committees and held two major events – our Conference, *Dollars and Bytes – Communications affordability now and tomorrow* and our *Meet the People Forum* in Canberra.

Our 2015 Conference highlighted the important issue of communications affordability. One outcome from the Conference was a joint research project with SACOSS on the affordability of telecommunications services for Centrelink beneficiaries. ACCAN commissioned seven research projects to assist building an evidence base for representational work. Our Independent Grants Program funded another six projects.

After a long drawn out process, we finally saw free calls to 1800 numbers from mobiles coming into place in July 2015. Now most providers no longer charge for these calls, however, calls to 1300 numbers from mobile phones remain an issue with some providers charging for these outside included plan value and many organisations using these as their main contact number.

I am also pleased to report that the proposed three strikes Copyright Notice Scheme was abandoned after rights holders and industry were not able to reach an agreement on funding

Teresa Corbin
Chief
Executive
Officer



the scheme. Interestingly with the increase in streaming services in Australia illegal downloading has reduced as consumer awareness about what is legal and illegal content has grown.

Complaint levels to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) saw an overall annual decline with a slight upturn in the last quarter. An emerging issue has been concerns about slow data speeds, which led to ACCAN calling for the implementation of a broadband performance monitoring program. As more and more consumers connect to the NBN we have also increased our consultation, research and consumer education in this area. With Government agencies shifting to online delivery, we are keen to ensure

Government services remain accessible for all Australians.

We continued to work with our membership base who assisted in setting our policy priorities. We have also consolidated our industry engagement with regular consultation from the CEO level down for many providers. We are looking forward to the year ahead with the Government's focus on better regulation and a review of the consumer safeguards regime as well as the Review of the Universal Service Obligation.

I'd like to express my thanks to ACCAN's dedicated staff for their hard work throughout the year. I'd also like to extend my thanks to our supporters, volunteers, members, our industry partners and those who attended our events and Advisory Forums.

POLICY

The dedicated ACCAN policy team has worked hard to represent communications consumer interests in the 2015-16 year, and on delivering on our policy priorities.

Throughout the year we engaged with the industry, regulators, the Department of Communications and the Arts and Government to advocate for:

- Better services for poorly served areas
- Better consumer protections and communications services for all
- Removal of discriminatory barriers to broadcast and online content, and adoption of Government accessible ICT purchasing policies
- Improved affordability of telecommunications services for low income consumers, including a review of the inadequate Centrelink Telecommunications Allowance (CTA)
- Supporting better consumer decision making through relevant, easy to understand and reliable information, such as independent broadband performance monitoring reporting

MAJOR CONSULTATIONS

We have worked on a number of major external inquiries and consultations of critical importance to our membership, including the 2015 Regional Telecommunications Review,

Una Lawrence
Director of Policy



the Australian Treasury Review of the Australian Consumer Law, and preliminary work on our response to the 2016 Productivity Commission's Inquiry on the Universal Service Obligation. In all, the policy team has represented the consumer voice on 30 consultations in the last 12 months.

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION AND INDUSTRY SELF-REGULATION

Our ongoing formal representation of consumers on a number of key stakeholder committees and forums has continued, such as on the ACCC Consumer Consultative Committee, and the ACMA Consumer Consultative Forum. We have drawn regulator attention

to issues such as potentially misleading advertising of telecommunications products, consumer protections during NBN switchover, battery back-up arrangements, and third party charging on mobile phone bills.

Our ongoing engagement in telecommunications industry self-regulation has involved participation and active input to a number of Communications Alliance working groups. Significant consumer issues dealt with included reviews of arrangements for life threatening and unwelcome calls, priority assistance protections for consumers with medical conditions, and industry oversight of compliance with the Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code.

POLICY POSITIONS 2015-16

- The Connected Consumer
- Accessible programming on TV
- Affordable communications
- Independent broadband performance monitoring
- A guarantee for the future

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We have worked extensively with our members and other experts on policy responses to major systemic issues detrimental to consumers. Poor quality data services, connection and repair delays, unreliable voice services, and affordability barriers are all priority issues for consumers that have informed our approach.

RESEARCH

Research to inform and complement our policy work has included:

- A survey to get a greater understanding of how consumers decide on broadband plans, and what information is needed to make better choices.

- Working with SACOSS on a survey of Centrelink beneficiaries to determine their ability to get and stay connected under current arrangements. Results showed that many low-income consumers struggle to stay connected and supported our call for a review of the CTA, along with other affordability measures.
- A comprehensive demographic 'map' identifying consumers who struggle to afford telecommunications services, which will inform responses crafted to meet the needs of different sectors.

ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT ICT

A major achievement has been our work with the Federal Department of

Finance, Standards Australia and the Australian Human Rights Commission on the local adoption of a European standard for accessible ICT procurement. ACCAN has advocated for the adoption of a whole-of-Government procurement policy for accessible ICT, to give Australians with disability greater opportunity for economic, social and community participation.

The active participation of our members has been vital to the representative work of the ACCAN policy team throughout the year. We thank them all for their support, and look forward to working with members, Government and industry to deliver more gains for communications consumers in the year ahead.

GRANTS

The ACCAN Grants Scheme remains a competitive and exciting program funding innovative projects in the communications consumer space. In June, the successful Grants for the 2016 Round were announced. These include projects that will examine the ballooning market of mental health apps, the security implications of smart home Internet of Things devices, and ways to assist victims of identity theft.

Consultancy group N-Carta undertook a comprehensive review of the ACCAN Grants Scheme in 2015. We were pleased that the independent review found the Scheme to be “run in a fair, competitive, accountable and transparent manner.” The review highlighted the Scheme’s efficient and professional processes, the expertise and independence of the Assessment Panel and the clarity of the Scheme’s guidelines. Furthermore, the Scheme was found to fully comply with the Commonwealth Grants Guidelines.

Two new members joined the Independent Grants Panel in the 2015-16 financial year. Dr Lareen Newman was appointed to the Panel for a three-year term to replace Dr Sarah Dods whose term had expired. Associate Professor Ellie Rennie was recruited to replace Dr Scott Ewing who withdrew from the Panel due to personal reasons. I’d like to take this opportunity

Narelle Clark
Director of Operations - Deputy CEO



to thank both Dr Dods and Dr Ewing for their contribution to the success of the ACCAN Grants Scheme and welcome the new members to the Panel.

A review and refinement of the Grants Scheme Guidelines took place in early 2016 in response to the ACCAN Mid-Term Contract Review. The new Guidelines were drafted to more clearly state priorities for projects in the forthcoming round.

Six projects were completed during the 2015-16 financial year. The completed projects are outlined in this report. For more information and to access resources produced by Grants projects visit the ACCAN website.

IMPROVING THE COMMUNICATION OF PRIVACY INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS

This project, completed by the Communications Law Centre, UTS, examined the problem of obtaining the informed consent of consumers for the privacy policies of consumer contracts. It provides recommendations to regulators, industry participants and consumer advocacy groups for ways to improve the communication of important privacy information to consumers.

THE STATE OF COMPETITION IN THE AUSTRALIAN MOBILE RESALE MARKET

The ANU’s Research School of Accounting and Business Information Systems

investigated the state of competition in the mobile telecommunications industry, taking into account ownership structures, product offerings, retail presence and other characteristics. It also examined the effectiveness of industry regulation. The project produced a report and tip sheet – ‘5 knows before saying yes.’

RECHARGE: WOMEN’S TECHNOLOGY SAFETY, LEGAL RESOURCES, RESEARCH AND TRAINING

The ReCharge: Women’s Technology Safety project was a collaboration between Women’s Legal Service NSW, the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria and WESNET. This project expands the work of the SmartSafe project Australia-wide through a national survey, creation of legal guides for front line workers and referral information for all states and territories, and development of online training programs.

DEMYSTIFYING PERSONAL CLOUD SERVICES: AN INVESTIGATION OF AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The aim of this RMIT research was to facilitate consumer comparison of different cloud provider models and articulate the benefits and risks associated with cloud computing. The project produced a comprehensive analysis of the current state and evolution of personal cloud services in Australia, making a number of policy recommendations and it produced a set of guidelines in the form of an infographic poster to help consumers navigate the cloud service provider marketplace.

THE DIGITAL AGE PROJECT: STRATEGIES THAT ENABLE OLDER SOCIAL HOUSING RESIDENTS TO USE THE INTERNET

Southern Cross University’s Regional Initiative for Social Innovation and Research group

“The ACCAN Grants Scheme has now proudly curated 40 projects with ongoing impact through both its research rigour and quality educational outputs.”

undertook a collaborative project designed to measure and understand the economic, social, and community impact of access to and use of broadband-enabled information technologies. The team measured effective use of the internet, psychological measures of resilience and attitudes to uptake of electronic communication. An evidence-based strategic advice paper was produced to inform future policy development.

DON’T JUST SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE

Justice Connect documented the experience of migrants having difficulties paying mobile phone bills, following their journey through seeking legal advice, negotiating with telecommunications providers and complaint handling. Training was provided and migrants received legal advice and explanations about telecommunications charges at a Bring Your Bills event. Community members were then mentored to create information videos in various community languages.

CONSUMER AWARENESS

Throughout 2015-16, ACCAN maintained its position as the go-to organisation for information and comments on consumer issues in the telecommunications industry. During the year, we achieved 513 media mentions.

Our commitment to informing communications consumers of the latest news and issues that affects them has remained one of our top priorities. Throughout the year we issued 24 media releases, covering topics including affordability, accessibility, NBN, TIO complaints, mobile coverage and broadband monitoring. In the same period we posted 61 'Hot issues' articles on our website. These articles featured information, tips and news on topics like regional telecommunications, mobile data and plans, global roaming, telecommunications outages, captioning and audio description.

In the media, we commented on issues including: billing fees, the Regional Telecommunications Review, Telstra mobile and internet outages, pre-paid plans, the Customer Service Guarantee, NBN satellite, television accessibility and broadband monitoring. Our media comments appeared in national publications like *The Australian*, *The Australian Financial Review* and news.com.au, as well as daily newspapers including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and

Luke Sutton
Public Relations Officer



the *Daily Telegraph*. Our media comments also appeared in many regional and specialist periodicals.

This year we launched a number of new consumer resources. At our *Meet the People Forum* in February, Minister for Communications, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, launched our information pack: *Top tips for phones and internet*. The pack consists of five brochures and bookmarks that give tips on common communications consumer issues. So far 1500 copies of the pack have been distributed. ACCAN's new website was launched in May. The new website is mobile friendly, accessible and more user friendly. So far it has attracted positive feedback from our stakeholders.

A second edition of the *Community Consultation Guide* was launched to assist communities in putting together a business case for funding to improve mobile coverage in their areas. To coincide with the launch of NBN Sky Muster satellite plans, an online consumer guide was developed and launched for consumers who will receive services via satellite.

Our social media community has now grown to include more than 4100 followers across our Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn profiles. On Twitter we shared 1140 tweets, gained 302 new followers and achieved 969 retweets. Our Facebook page now has 1160 'likes' and over the year our posts had a combined reach of over 106,000.

SMALL BUSINESS

Once again, ACCAN's Small Business and Consumer Engagement Officer and the Digital Ready team provided small business and not-for-profit consumers with up to date information and training to help them gain the knowledge and skills required to take advantage of technology and communications services in the growing digital economy.

In 2015, ACCAN engaged Market Clarity to complete a research project to determine the telecommunications needs and wants of small business consumers. The report raised concerns for ACCAN that current offerings do not match the heavy reliance that small businesses have on telecommunications. ACCAN called for providers to offer dedicated services for small businesses, make

information about plans more easily available and for investment in specialist staff training to work with small businesses. We met with telecommunications providers to brief them individually about the findings. Two tip sheets were published to help small businesses understand options for broadband and to choose the service that will suit their business needs.

ACCAN's outreach work included meetings with the NSW and WA Small Business Commissioners to discuss issues including broadband speeds and mobile coverage, as well as attending events such as the 2015 Council of Small Business Australia (COSBOA) Conference. Small business telecommunications issues were also discussed at

the 2015 ACCAN National Conference in a panel session featuring representatives from COSBOA and NSW Farmers.

Throughout the year, ACCAN held information stalls at the CLICK Digital Expo, the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA) Conference and the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Small Biz Expo where tip sheets and Digital Ready resources were distributed.

A new and improved Digital Ready website was launched early in 2016. Over the year the content offering of the site has grown with the addition of four new video tutorials, 14 new blog posts and a new eBook – *Your Online Strategy*. The 'Friends of Digital Ready' section of the website was launched and so far, 37 organisations have signed up to have their logos and 'top tip' for small businesses published and shared on Digital Ready's Facebook page which now has more than 1600 'likes.'

The Digital Ready Project Manager delivered presentations on small business topics at the Community Colleges Australia Conference, the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce and the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. Outreach efforts were bolstered with the team contributing blog posts to external organisations and publications including: the Australian Graphic Design Association, Flying Solo, ALSCO, Dynamic Business and Creative + Business.

Small Business team:
Kelly Lindsay,
Alan Howard,
Paula Corvalan



INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

ISO WORKSHOP ON GLOBAL SERVICES

In May, ACCAN's CEO, Teresa Corbin, was nominated to attend a workshop held by the International Standards Organisation on service standards held in Geneva, Switzerland alongside the Consumer Policy Committee annual meeting. The event explored how best to design, assess and measure service excellence for the benefit of both businesses and consumers.

INTERNATIONAL PROCUREMENT FORUM

Held in Washington DC, the purpose of the International Procurement Forum was to discuss how public procurement of accessible ICT is being implemented around the world with a focus on how developing countries may adopt some of these models for advancing accessible ICT in their own jurisdictions. ACCAN's Disability Policy Advisor, Wayne Hawkins, participated in a panel session on the implementation of public procurement policies for accessible ICT.

M-ENABLING SUMMIT

Wayne also attended the 6th Annual M-Enabling Summit in Washington DC. The Summit is an international conference focusing on the enabling power of mobile technology for people with disability and older people. It was attended by over 500 delegates. Wayne delivered a presentation on ACCAN's involvement in progressing public procurement of accessible ICT.

GOOGLE CONSUMER PROTECTION SUMMIT

ACCAN's Director of Policy, Una Lawrence, and Policy Officer, Rachel Thomas, attended Google's Consumer Protection Summit in New York City in April. The event, attended by a number of international consumer organisations, discussed a range of policy directions and issues in today's technology world. Participants heard from 'Googlers' about their work and policy in a number of areas; from Android security to the Google Play store. Consumer bodies also had a chance to raise concerns facing consumers such as software updates, privacy and accessibility.

IANA COORDINATION GROUP

In September 2016, the contract for operation of the IANA database, housing the core information for operation of the Internet, will cease operation as a US government contract and instead move to management by public organisations. To prepare for this, an international internet governance committee was created in 2014 and ACCAN's Deputy CEO, Narelle Clark, was appointed a member. A proposal for a new model for oversight and operation of the Internet's assigned number authority (IANA) was completed in January by the committee and submitted to the US government. That proposal was accepted by the US National Telecommunications and Information Administration in June and implementation is proceeding.

CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS

ACCAN Policy Officer, Xavier O'Halloran, attended the 20th Consumers International World Congress which took place in Brasilia, Brazil in November. The theme for the event was 'Unlocking Consumer Power: A new vision for the global marketplace.' The Congress was an opportunity to engage with experts from across the consumer movement, civil society, government and private sector organisations. Members from across the globe shared stories of campaign successes on issues relevant to ACCAN's work.

INDIGENOUS FOCUS DAY AND BROADBAND FOR THE BUSH FORUM

ACCAN and the Indigenous Remote Communications Association hosted an Indigenous Focus Day held in conjunction with the Broadband for the Bush Forum in Brisbane in June 2016. The aim of the Focus Day was to promote digital inclusion projects and address the opportunities and obstacles for digital inclusion of Indigenous Australians. ACCAN also participated in a panel discussion at the Forum on equitable communication services for rural and remote consumers.

WACOSS CONFERENCE

ACCAN attended the Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) Conference in May 2016. ACCAN had an information booth at the Conference. This was an ideal opportunity to hear from delegates about the challenges regarding telecommunications in Western Australia. Delegates included representatives from many rural and remote Indigenous communities.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE

ACCAN attended the Financial Counselling Australia annual conference in Adelaide in May 2016. At the event we heard



case studies from financial counsellors about their work with low-income consumers who often struggle in their dealings with telecommunications and internet service providers.

YABUN

ACCAN's involvement with the Yabun Festival continued in 2016. We held a stall at the festival where we distributed information on common consumer issues relating to phones and the internet. Held on 26 January in Sydney, this year the event attracted over 15,000 attendees who gathered to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

FECCA CONFERENCE

In November 2015 ACCAN held a stall at the biennial Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) Conference. The Conference brought together community members and leaders to discuss issues that relate to Australia's multiculturalism. We were able to engage with a multicultural audience and

provide information and advice to attendees on communications issues.

ASCCA CONFERENCE

The ASCCA Conference was held in November 2015. Attending the Conference allowed ACCAN to meet with members and interact with seniors and people with age related loss of hearing or sight. ACCAN's Disability Policy Advisor delivered a presentation on Quality Captions and ACCAN also operated an information table at the conference.

COSBOA CONFERENCE

ACCAN attended the COSBOA Conference in July 2015. COSBOA is the peak body for small businesses in Australia and it was a good opportunity to engage with small businesses and hear about issues affecting them. Sessions included topics on e-Government and the digital future for business, which are relevant to ACCAN's small business work and Digital Ready.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

1. ACCC Consumer Consultative Committee
2. ACCC Infrastructure Consultative Committee
3. ACCC Performance Consultative Committee
4. ACCC Wholesale Telecommunications Consultative Forum
5. ACMA Consumer Consultative Forum
6. ACMA Emergency Call Service Advisory Committee
7. ACMA Numbering Advisory Committee
8. ACMA Technical Advisory Group
9. Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency Electromagnetic Emissions Health Reference Group
10. Communications Alliance Information on Accessibility Features for Equipment Code Working Committee
11. Communications Alliance Internet of Things Alliance Australia Executive Council
12. Communications Alliance Handling of Life Threatening and Unwelcome Communications Code Working Committee
13. Department of Communications and the Arts Stay Safe On-line Week Steering Group

14. Global Access Partners/ Department of Communications and the Arts National Standing Committee on Digital Engagement
15. Internet Australia Advisory Council
16. nbn Quarterly Marketing Group
17. nbn Wholesale Broadband Agreement Consumer Forum
18. National Forum on Emergency Warnings to the Community
19. National Relay Service National Advisory Committee
20. Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Consumer Privacy Network
21. Standards Australia JTC 1 Advisory Committee
22. Standards Australia IT 040 IT Accessibility
23. Standards Australia COPOLCO Mirror Committee
24. Telstra Digital Inclusion Index Advisory Committee
25. TIO Board
26. TIO Critical Friends Group
27. Australian Public Service Commission Roundtable on Accessible ICT

MEMBERS ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Members Advisory Forum (MAF) is to discuss the most important issues from the perspective of ACCAN's members and the people they represent. A MAF meeting was held on 28 April, 2016.

Johanna Plante
ACCAN Chair

Joanna Gibson
Isolated Children's Parents' Association

Nigel Waters
Australian Privacy Foundation

Laurie Patton
Internet Australia

Sue McGrath
Council on the Ageing Australia

Sarah Agar
Consumers' Federation of Australia

Graham Smith
Financial Counsellors Association of NSW

DISABILITY ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Disability Advisory Forum (DAF) is to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of key representatives in the disability sector. A DAF meeting was held on 8 November, 2015.

Johanna Plante
ACCAN Chair

Scott Hollier
Media Access Australia

CONSULTATION



Bruce Maguire
Vision Australia

Gunela Astbrink
ACCAN Member

Jessica Zammit
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Darryl Sellwood

Kyle Miers
Deaf Australia

Harold Hartfield
ACCAN Member

Dwayne Cranfeld
National Ethnic Disability Alliance

Roger Smith
Cochlear

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Indigenous Advisory Forum (IAF) is to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of key representatives in the Indigenous community. An IAF meeting was held on 19 August, 2015.

Heron Loban
ACCAN Member

Daniel Featherstone
Indigenous Remote Communications Association

Jenny Nixon
Indigenous Remote Communications Association

Luke Briscoe
National Indigenous Television

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Small Business Advisory Forum (SBAF) is to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of key representatives in the small business environment. A SBAF meeting was held last financial year on 9 June, 2015.

Len Bytheway
ACCAN Board

Peter Strong
COSBOA

Shara Evans
Market Clarity

Alyssa Stempniak
Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner

Ewan Brown
Gunghalin Community Council

Michelle Jacobs
NSW Farmers Association

Debbie Littlehales
Kiama Community College

SUBMISSIONS



ACCAN made a number of submissions to Government, regulatory and other inquiries in 2015-16. Most of our submissions can be found online at: accan.org.au/submissions.

Policy team Back row: Kelly Lindsay, Una Lawrence, Rachel Thomas. Front Row: Xavier O'Halloran, Wayne Hawkins, Jeremy Riddle.

JULY 2015

- Department of Communications and the Arts, International Mobile Roaming Standard
- Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, Regional Telecommunications Review 2016
- Communications Alliance, Review of revised priority assistance for life threatening medical conditions code C609

AUGUST 2015

- ACCC, Transitional arrangements for in train orders
- Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Australia Audit
- Department of Communications and the Arts, Migration Assurance Policy
- ACCC, Proposed NBN Wholesale Markets Report

SEPTEMBER 2015

- Communications Alliance, Review of IPND Code and Guideline
- Communications Alliance, Review of Handling of Life Threatening and Unwelcome Communications Code
- auDA, .au Domain names Direct Registrations

OCTOBER 2015

- ACMA, Review of the Broadcasting Services (Television Captioning) Standard 2013
- Productivity Commission, Intellectual Property Arrangements

DECEMBER 2015

- ACMA, Review of Captioning Standard
- nbn co, CVC pricing industry consultation
- Communications Alliance, Draft revisions, TCP Code Ch. 9

JANUARY 2016

- Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee, Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Access Regime and NBN Companies) Bill 2015

- International Telecommunications Union, Council Working Group-Internet, Access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs
- Department of Communications and the Arts, Captioning Regulatory Framework Consultation
- nbn co, Fibre-to-the-distribution point product consultation

FEBRUARY 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Carrier licence conditions for new developments
- Department of Communications and the Arts, Updating Australia's copyright laws
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, Funding Model Review

MARCH 2016

- Attorney General's Department, Serious data breach notifications bill – (exposure draft)

- ACMA, Varying the International Mobile Roaming Standard
- ACCC, Superfast Broadband Access Service service description

APRIL 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Telco Act 20A exemption request

MAY 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Consultation on NRS and communications accessibility
- Treasury, Australian Consumer Law Review

JUNE 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Draft Review of the ACMA
- ACMA, Pre-paid ID Checking Determination: Draft working group report

PUBLICATIONS

Briedis, M., Webb, J. & Fraser, M. 2016, *Improving the communication of privacy information for consumers*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

Hodge, G. et al. 2015, *What Standards? The need for evidence-based Auslan translation standards and production guidelines*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

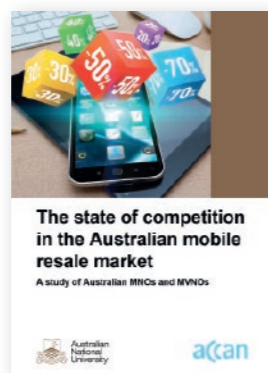
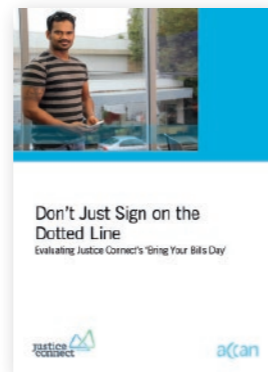
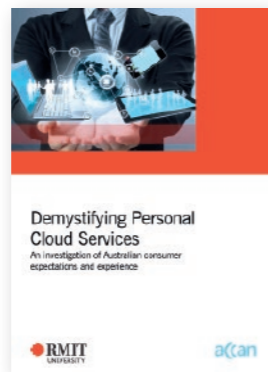
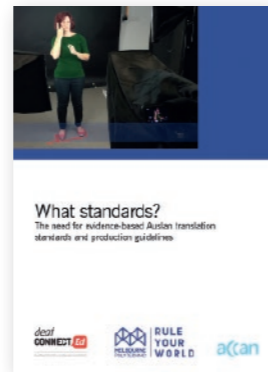
Molla, A., Cooper, V., Abareshi, A. & Pittayachawan, S. 2015 *Demystifying personal cloud services: An investigation of Australian consumer expectations and experience*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

Perera, A., Simpson, L. & Lipianin, Y. 2015, *Don't just sign on the dotted line: Evaluating Justice Connect's 'Bring Your Bills Day'*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

Richardson, A. & Shailer, G. 2016, *The state of competition in the Australian mobile resale market*. Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

Seton, C., Tucker, J., & van der Zwan, R. 2015, *The Digital Age Project: Strategies that enable older social housing residents to use the internet*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

Wood, P. & Riddle, J. 2016, *Community Consultation Guide 2nd Edition: Tips to improve mobile connectivity in your community*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



RESEARCH

These research projects were commissioned and completed by ACCAN to build the evidence base for raising consumer concerns and are separate from the ACCAN Grants Scheme.

ANALOGUE ENTITLEMENTS IN A DIGITAL AGE

As part of a larger research project on the affordability of telecommunications for low-income consumers, the South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) conducted a survey and analysis around the adequacy of the Centrelink Telephone Allowance (CTA). The results of this survey were the basis for ACCAN's calls for a review of the CTA.

AFFORDABILITY MAP

For many Australians, the issue of affordability is creating barriers to accessing communications services. Overcoming these barriers is increasingly important as government services and information become 'digital by default.' ACCAN's 'Affordability Map' aimed to identify the different groups in Australia that face affordability issues.

MEGACHARGE

The University of Technology Sydney examined mobile data plans that round up data sessions to the next megabyte. This research studied more than 20,000 data sessions and found that for some plans, data rounding added as much as 80 per cent in rounding 'overhead' to consumers' bills.

BROADBAND PERFORMANCE CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

This survey of 1000 household decision makers explored the basis on which consumers decide on broadband products. It found that there was a lack of information around broadband that ultimately led to disappointment with services.

HOME, TWEET HOME

The *Home, tweet home* report was authored by the 2015 Google-ACCAN Intern, Alexander Vulkanovski. The report examines the complex world of possibilities opened up by the emerging Internet of Things, where everything from light bulbs to parking spaces are monitored, connected and available to the consumer via the internet.

INFORMING SMALL BUSINESS

ACCAN commissioned a research project with Market Clarity to determine the telecommunications needs and wants of small business consumers and whether these are being met by providers. The research raised concerns for ACCAN that the current offerings from providers do not match the increasingly heavy reliance that small businesses have on telecommunications.

THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION (USO)

ACCAN contracted telecommunications economist, John de Ridder, to prepare an Occasional Paper on the future of the USO to provide new perspectives. The paper highlighted the size of the affordability barrier that needs to be addressed, with de Ridder estimating that up to one million households are in need of support to access communications services.

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

AS AT JUNE 30, 2016

- 2508+Disconnected
- Aadmi Co
- Able Australia
- Achieve Australia
- Adult Learning Australia
- The Australia Institute
- Australian Communication Exchange
- Australian Council of Social Service
- Australian Federation of Deaf Societies
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Australian Pensioners and Superannuants Federation
- Australian Privacy Foundation
- Australian Regional Business Development Specialists
- Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association
- Better Hearing Australia
- Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Broadband for the Bush Alliance
- Broadband Today Alliance
- CARE Inc
- Central Land Council
- Centre for Appropriate Technology
- Centre for eCommerce & Communications
- CHOICE
- CICADA QLD
- CITIES - Centre for Indigenous Technology Information and Engineering Solutions
- City of Greater Geelong
- Collective of Self Help Groups
- Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Assoc. of Victoria
- Communication Rights Australia
- Communications Law Centre
- Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
- Community Legal Centres NSW
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Consumer Credit Legal Service WA
- Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre
- Consumers' Association of South Australia
- Consumers' Federation of Australia
- Copper Development Centre, Australia Ltd
- Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc.
- Council on the Ageing Australia
- Country Women's Association of Australia
- Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre
- Deaf Australia
- Deaf Children Australia
- Deaf NT
- Deaf Society of NSW
- Deafness Forum of Australia
- Desert Knowledge Australia
- Differently Abled People Association Inc.
- Digital Tasmania
- Diversicare
- Electronic Frontiers Australia
- Ethnic Communities Council of WA
- Evidence Technology Holdings Pty Ltd
- Family Drug Support
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- Financial Counselling Australia
- Financial Counsellors Association of Queensland
- Financial Rights Legal Centre
- Health Consumers of Rural & Remote Australia
- Helplines Australia
- Homelessness Australia Inc.
- IDEAS NSW
- Illawarra Legal Centre Inc
- Inclusive UX Pty Ltd
- Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd
- Indigenous Remote Communications Association
- Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development
- Internet Australia
- IP Neighborhood
- Isolated Children's Parents Association Australia
- Isolated Children's Parents Association NT
- Isolated Children's Parents Association of NSW
- Isolated Children's Parents Association Queensland
- Isolated Children's Parents Association WA
- itControl
- Kingsford Legal Centre
- Macarthur Legal Centre
- Media Access Australia
- National Association of Community Legal Centres
- National Association of Tenant Organisations
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre
- National Council of Women of Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre
- Novita Children's Services
- NSW Farmers Association
- Parawa Agricultural Bureau Inc
- People with Disabilities WA
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Queensland Consumers Association
- Queensland Council of Social Service
- Redfern Legal Centre
- Signs Ministries Charitable Trust
- South Australian Financial Counsellors Association
- Swinburne Institute for Social Research
- Tasmanian Deaf Society
- Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc.
- Tenants Queensland Inc.
- Vision Australia
- W.O.W! - Willing Older Workers Incorporated
- Western Australian Deaf Society Inc.
- WEstjustice (formerly Footscray Community Legal Centre)
- Westwood Spice
- Women with Disabilities Australia
- Women's Legal Services Aust
- Women's Legal Services NSW
- Workventures
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland



**Australian Communications
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You can contact
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National Relay Service -
www.relayservice.gov.au



Australian Communications
Consumer Action Network