



Australian Communications  
Consumer Action Network

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR



Australian Communications  
Consumer Action Network Limited  
(ACCAN)  
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“ACCAN has demonstrated successes in consistently delivering for consumers”

## Chair report

**JOHANNA PLANTE**  
CHAIRPERSON ACCAN BOARD

## 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.

### 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.

2016/17 has been a standout year for ACCAN culminating in a new five-year Funding Contract to ensure our continuance as the voice for communications consumers into the future. Underpinning this major achievement was ACCAN's demonstrated successes in consistently delivering for consumers, and recognition across government and industry of the ongoing need for competent, committed and courageous consumer representation.

The awarding of the new Contract followed a wide-ranging review by the Department of Communication and the Arts of consumer representation in the telecommunications industry. This constituted an invaluable opportunity for ACCAN to reflect on our achievements and be publicly scrutinised by our stakeholders.

And we came through with flying colours, with widespread support for the rationale, concept and reality of an “ACCAN” and many submissions testifying to the groundbreaking impact and huge value of ACCAN's work. The outcome was also testimony to the strength and maturity of our relationships with stakeholders and the mutual trust built up over time.

Towards the end of the year we embarked on a strategic

planning exercise to formulate ACCAN's directions for the next five years, kicking-off in June 2017 with a consultative members' workshop. ACCAN's new 2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan will be finalised later in 2017 following further member consultation.

This year saw further changes to the ACCAN Board with our Deputy Chair and long-standing ACCAN and CTN Board member, Holly Raiche, and Board Director, Michael West, standing down at the September 2016 Board elections, and Sarah Wilson and Nadia Moffat joining the Board.

I extend a warm welcome to Sarah and Nadia and pay tribute to Holly and Michael for their contributions and commitment to the consumer cause over many years.

In concluding I want to once again acknowledge the competence, dedication and output of the ACCAN CEO and her team. But in my final ACCAN Chair report I will also add a more personal note of thanks.

So to everyone at ACCAN - thank you for your unwavering support, for your tolerance and warmth, for always assisting with a smile, and for making it so easy and so much fun to be the ACCAN Chairperson.





“ACCAN fought to achieve many consumer wins this past year”

## CEO overview

**TERESA CORBIN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is a pleasure to be able to report on many wins for communications consumers with several new protections coming into place. ACCAN ensured that the consumer voice has been heard in significant debates such as the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Universal Service Obligation (USO).

ACCAN made a substantial contribution to policy discussions completing over 40 submissions and representing consumers on more than 30 committees. We raised consumer awareness with the publication of several new guides and achieved over 900 media mentions. Our Grants program continues to deliver quality outcomes.

Our 2016 Conference – *ACCANect: Equipping consumers to stay connected* – was attended by more than 220 delegates. It was an opportunity to launch new research on consumer decision making and the communication of privacy information. We also organised a consumer roundtable with industry on the Customer Service Guarantee.

In late 2016, we held an advisory forum with rural, regional and remote stakeholders which led to the formation of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition. This Coalition includes member organisations from the farming sector, country women's associations, rural health organisations and others.

In May, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman six monthly complaints update showed what appears to be a trend of complaints going up across the board. We expressed our disappointment and let industry know that we will be

keeping a close eye on complaints, especially as more consumers switch to the NBN.

Increasingly the issues that affect Australian communications consumers are global issues, so we were pleased to receive funding support to participate in the Consumers International Asia Pacific Regional Meeting and Digital Consumers Workshop in Hong Kong in October 2016. This work provided the basis for a G20 Digital Consumers Summit in Germany in March 2017. ACCAN staff were also supported by Google to participate in their Consumer Policy Summit in Berlin and their Accessibility Summit in San Francisco.

During the year I attended the APECTEL Information Working Group in Japan representing the International Telecommunications Users Group. ACCAN was also part of the Australian Delegation to the International Standards Consumer Policy Committee in Malaysia.

The Government's review of consumer representation in the telecommunications industry highlighted that ACCAN's success depends on contributions from many stakeholders. I want to acknowledge the industry and government representatives for their ongoing honest and frank engagement with ACCAN. Thank you also to our many project partners, conference sponsors and Google for their continuing support of our internship program. I also extend my appreciation to our volunteers, members and Board directors. After another huge year, I must express my enormous gratitude to ACCAN's devoted staff for their ongoing hard work.

## Consumer wins



- The Productivity Commission USO Inquiry Report acknowledged that the USO is out dated.
- The Australian Consumer Law Review Interim Report included further consultation on increases in disclosure around extended warranties and the need for guidance from regulators to address uncertainty about how guarantees apply to digital content.
- The Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Bill 2016 was adopted in Parliament.
- The Telecommunications Reform Package contained guarantees that all Australian premises must be able to access a network capable of delivering peak speeds of 25Mbps download and 5Mbps upload.
- The ACCC secured funding for a broadband performance monitoring program.

- nbn announced that Sky Muster data allowances will double.
- The Minister for Finance acknowledged ACCAN's work with the Department of Finance and Standards Australia on the local adoption of a European Standard for public procurement of ICT products and services.
- nbn updated its website to allow consumers to get construction information by entering their address.
- ACCAN made representations for the introduction of audio description on free-to-air TV which included a video question broadcast on ABC's Q&A program in August 2016.
- The ACCC's draft decision on Domestic Mobile Roaming reflected issues raised by ACCAN.





## Policy

**UNA LAWRENCE**  
DIRECTOR OF POLICY

This past year the ACCAN policy team worked tirelessly to represent communications consumer issues, deliver on our policy priorities and ensure consumers are well represented in the telecommunications space.

Our work to achieve our policy priorities is summarised in this report.

### **BETTER COMMUNICATIONS FOR POORLY SERVED AREAS**

In September 2016, ACCAN launched the Get Connected resource to provide consumers with information on interim broadband solutions in areas that are currently underserved. We have complemented this by attending member events and community meetings to share information about NBN rollout issues, and discuss solutions to address poor mobile coverage and choice of provider.

### **IMPROVED CONSUMER SAFEGUARDS AND BETTER REGULATION**

We engaged closely with the Productivity Commission's review of the USO. While we agreed with the Commission that the USO is in need of updating, we raised serious consumer concerns about the future of voice services, particularly in areas where mobile coverage is patchy, and advocated

the necessity for consumer safeguards to support consumer connectivity.

We represented consumer interests to the Federal Government in its consultations on the Telecommunications Reform Package legislation. In June we welcomed the provisions in the Bill to create a Statutory Infrastructure Provider regime, which potentially will ensure that all premises can access a network capable of delivering peak retail plans with 25Mbps download speed and 5Mbps upload speeds.

We highlighted the need for improved consumer safeguards when we appeared before the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network in April, identifying customer service standards and clear responsibilities for network providers and retailers as key issues.

In late 2016 we began work on the review of the Mobile Premium Services Code calling for better consumer protections to be included in the Code.

### **IMPROVED CONSUMER DECISION MAKING**

The policy team has continued its substantial contribution to ACCAN's consumer information, aimed to assist consumers to navigate the complex telecommunications market.

ACCAN celebrated a major consumer win with the Federal Government's decision to fund the ACCC's broadband

“We rose to the challenge of representing consumers in the evolving communications landscape”

monitoring program. The program will give consumers information on broadband performance, helping them to make more informed decisions about which provider to choose.

Our engagement with the review of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and the Productivity Commission's review of ACL Enforcement and Administration has ensured the perspective of telecommunications consumers has been represented. We have consistently advocated for consumers to have access to the right information so they can make informed choices about which products and services to buy.

### **AFFORDABLE COMMUNICATIONS**

Our *Connectivity Costs* research, conducted by the South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), demonstrated the need for measures to address telecommunications affordability barriers for low-income consumers. Informed by this evidence, ACCAN advocated for a review of the payment levels and eligibility of the Centrelink Telephone Allowance, and for broader industry low-income measures to be adopted beyond the package offered by Telstra.

### **IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY**

ACCAN continued to work for accessible broadcasting, through a number of submissions to the ACMA regarding captioning exemptions and targets for broadcast television. We also engaged with the 2016 review of the captioning obligations in Part 9D of the Broadcasting Services Act, recommending that all free-to-air channels provide captions over the entire broadcast day. As a member of a coalition of blindness sector organisations, we have continued the push for the introduction of audio description on free-to-air TV with the ABC and government.

Our advocacy for the adoption of accessible ICT government procurement policies has significantly contributed to the local adoption of the European Standard by Standards Australia, resulting in the Commonwealth Government acknowledging the local Standard in its procurement rules.

We worked closely with disability sector organisations in

representing community concerns over the future funding of the National Relay Service in response to the government announcement of a funding cap in June 2017.

We also engaged with the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the outcomes of the National Disability Strategy, identifying the key areas where consumers with disability are struggling to get and stay connected to communications services.

### **PRIVACY AND CYBER SECURITY**

ACCAN represented consumers in important policy debates about privacy and cyber security. We engaged with the Productivity Commission's Data Availability and Use inquiry, highlighting the need for measures to reduce the risk of consumer re-identification. We have participated with the Digital Transformation Agency's ongoing work in developing a trusted digital identity, and raised consumer privacy concerns with industry and regulators in our work on industry codes.

### **COMPETITION AND MARKET STRUCTURES**

ACCAN made several submissions to the ACCC's inquiry into Domestic Mobile Roaming. Following close consultation with our regional, rural and remote members and stakeholders, we supported the ACCC's draft decision to not declare a domestic mobile roaming service. This was due to a lack of evidence that consumers in regional Australia would benefit from domestic mobile roaming.

We have been a persistent consumer voice in discussions and consultations as the telecommunications industry evolves into a new structure with the National Broadband Network rollout. We engaged with the ACCC's broad study into the telecommunications market and likely developments over the next five years, identifying issues that may be limiting competition in the market (such as a lack of information on speeds and performance), or negatively affecting consumers (such as a lack of adequate services in some areas and a need for guarantees over broadband services).



## Grants

**NARELLE CLARK**  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS/DEPUTY CEO

The quality of outputs produced under the ACCAN Grants Scheme continues to strengthen with a number of high-impact projects completed this year. In addition, six new projects were funded to a total of \$282,167. Grants projects span the community, university and research sectors, and this year has featured several high-profile and public launches. The ongoing success of the Scheme, now in its seventh year, was recognised in the 2017 consumer representation review with a number of positive recommendations made.

This included an overhaul of the Grant Guidelines, including a lifting of the cap on funding a project can ask for, the possibility for multi-year grants and a more strategic approach to the topics covered by the Scheme. We continue to strive for a Grants Scheme that deepens ACCAN's evidence-base for its work on behalf of consumers. We look forward to implementing a more flexible and responsive Scheme under the new arrangements.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing panel member Dr Lareen Newman for her time on the Independent Grants Panel. We would also like to thank Professor Gerard Goggin and Associate Professor Ellie Rennie who are both continuing their tenure on the Panel. For more information on the Scheme, visit: [www.accan.org.au/grants](http://www.accan.org.au/grants)

### PROJECTS COMPLETED IN FY2016-17

#### **RANK THE TELCO**

The Financial and Consumer Rights Council published its *Rank the telco* report which documented and analysed the opinions and experiences of Victorian financial counsellors regarding the financial hardship practices of telecommunications services.

#### **FINDING PEACE OF MIND**

The *Finding peace of mind* project examined the largely unregulated mental health app market. Researchers from the University of Sydney developed a toolkit for app developers to help them identify and mitigate risks related to privacy, predatory or deceptive advertising, and commercial biases in their apps. An illustrated tip sheet was produced to help consumers navigate mental health apps.

#### **ACCESSING SUBSCRIPTION VIDEO ON DEMAND**

Researchers at Curtin University conducted the first Australian study to examine disability access to subscription video on demand (VOD) services. Contempo-

“The ongoing success of the Grants Scheme was recognised in the consumer representation review”

rary developments in Australian VOD were evaluated against Australian broadcasting legislation, online access recommendations and international services.

#### **CAN I DOWNLOAD A CAR?**

This project looked at what consumers need to know before printing in 3D. Researchers from the University of Melbourne created a website called *3D Printing Info* to offer consumers easy to understand guides and information to help safeguard their work and take advantage of this emerging technology.

#### **OUR PHONES, OUR RIGHTS**

Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media worked with remote community members and design agency Gilimbaa to produce what are believed to be the first printed and audio resources in five key Indigenous languages. The resources provide much-needed information on phone costs, how to deal with communications problems, and more.

#### **GOING ONLINE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS**

Researchers at Monash University and Federation University looked at proxy internet users, who find themselves using online services and applications on behalf of others. They found that despite proxy internet users commonly involving themselves in important online activities, few have considered the possible implications of their help to themselves, or the person they are assisting.

#### **AFFORDABLE ACCESS**

Media Access Australia created a suite of resources providing up-to-date information about what to consider when buying technology to ensure it meets a user's accessibility needs. A new website and a range of tip sheets include practical reviews of affordable technolo-

gy, accessibility features and tips for users with disability.

#### **TELECOMS EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

The Association of Hazaras in Victoria ran a series of successful workshops educating more than 90 local community members on their phone and internet rights. Partnering with the Victorian Afghan Associations Network and the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre, brochures were created and educational workshops were run in Dari at the Andisha Community Language School.

#### **INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS IN AUSTRALIA ON SECURITY AND PRIVACY THREATS FOR SMART-HOME IOT DEVICES**

Consumers are increasingly buying connected Internet of Things (IoT) devices for their homes. These devices can provide consumer benefits, however, they can also pose huge risks to privacy and security. UNSW researchers profiled these threats using real devices available in the market, and developed materials to educate consumers and policy-makers on the risks associated with IoT.

#### **UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER IDENTITY THEFT RISKS ACROSS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA**

With the number of identity theft cases growing in Australia, this project produced an evidence-based understanding of potential risks and effective safeguards relating to identity theft. By analysing anonymised identity theft cases, researchers from the Australian National University developed consumer-oriented preventative information, plus a series of interventions that can be applied directly to victim risk assessments.



# Highlights

“We grew our social media reach substantially in 2016-17”

## Consumer awareness

**LUKE SUTTON**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

ACCAN has remained the go-to organisation for media comments and information on consumer issues in the telecommunications industry. During the 2016-17 financial year, we achieved 913 media mentions. This is significantly more than last year's tally of 513.

We informed media about important consumer issues and developments issuing 20 media releases covering topics like regional telecommunications, accessibility, broadband availability, affordability and the USO.

We responded to prominent consumer issues in media stories about: broadband speed claims, mobile bill shock, switching to the NBN, complaints, domestic mobile roaming and global roaming.

Our media comments appeared in high-profile publications like the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and news.com.au. With our membership of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition, we raised ACCAN's profile with regional and rural media with frequent comments and media releases on regional telecommunications issues.

Throughout the year, we have kept consumers informed on the latest news, issues and advice with regular blogs, updated consumer resources and a growing presence on social media. During the year we posted 35 blogs on the ACCAN website. Posts about making a complaint about slow broadband speeds, excess mobile data costs and fraudulent mobile number porting were very popular with consumers.

### These consumer resources were produced during the year:

- Our Get Connected resource.
- New brochures on telecommunications compensation and NBN.
- Posters on telecommunications compensation and making a complaint.
- A second edition of the Sky Muster guide.
- Four magazines that focused on equipping consumers to stay connected, Get Connected, regional and rural telecommunications and the highlight Grants projects from 2012-17.

The ACCAN website continues to be a hub for consumer information and resources. In total, our website attracted 195,908 webpage views, which is considerably more than last year. The most popular pages on our website were resources on how to choose a good value NBN plan, how to use less data on your smartphone and getting a refund for third party charges on mobile phone bills. The Get Connected resource also proved popular with consumers.

This year we saw our social media presence grow substantially as we shared more content across our channels. We now have more than 5,500 followers across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

See our highlights on the next page for more information on our consumer reach and social media.



**913**  
MEDIA MENTIONS



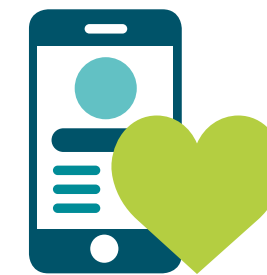
**20**  
MEDIA RELEASES



**35**  
BLOG POSTS



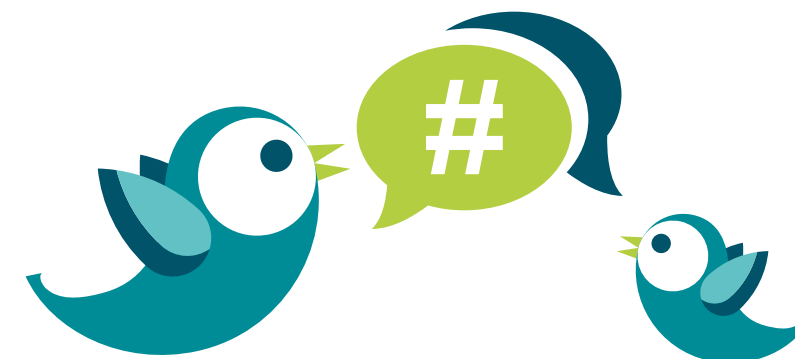
**195,908**  
WEBPAGE VIEWS



**OVER 5,500**  
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

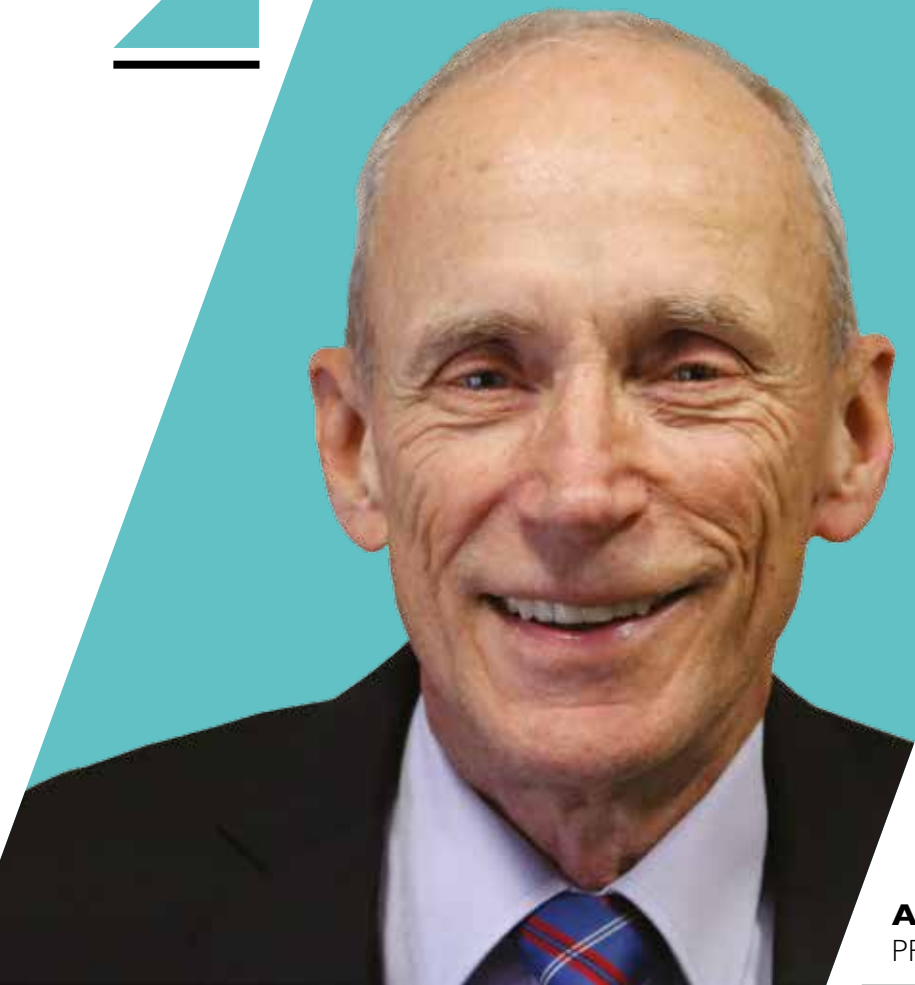


OUR FACEBOOK POSTS REACHED  
**202,857 PEOPLE**



**2,134**  
TWEETS

**2,208**  
RETWEETS



## Digital Ready wrap up

**ALAN HOWARD**  
PROJECT MANAGER – DIGITAL BUSINESS KITS

Since launching in July 2014, Digital Ready has helped small businesses and not-for-profit organisations understand and use digital technology and get online to improve their businesses.

The free training program was developed under the Digital Business Kits initiative launched by the Department of Communications in 2013. Under this program, ACCAN was awarded \$500,000 in funding over four years to create, maintain and promote the kit.

The kit was originally aimed at small businesses and not-for-profit organisations in the Arts, Recreation and Education Services sector, but was expanded to appeal to a broader audience.

Over four years, the team has done a great job creating not just a training kit, but a community where small businesses can get advice, tips and information to help them get online.

The project produced six easy to use and informative training modules. These modules have guided organisations to use social media, get connected, use eCommerce, create online strategies, use the Cloud and work remotely. The quizzes at the end of each module have been a standout feature of Digital Ready, allowing the team to interact with small businesses and provide them with feedback on their learning.

In addition to the training modules, the Digital Ready

team successfully built relationships with stakeholders. They engaged with a range of small businesses to create the 'Friends of Digital Ready' initiative allowing small businesses to share their top business tip and promote their business whilst also providing vital feedback to ACCAN and the government on the quality, value and usefulness of the training. More than 60 small businesses participated in the program sharing their tips with others.

Digital Ready established a strong presence on Facebook. With almost 2500 Facebook likes, the Digital Ready team used this platform to engage with small businesses, share tips, information and news.

The regularly updated Digital Ready blog has also been a great resource for small businesses. Overall, 62 informative posts were published covering diverse topics like telecommunications outages, scams, social media and managing websites. The Digital Ready team was also invited by local councils, education organisations, chambers of commerce and IT user groups to present at their conferences, host display tables and participate in workshops.

With the government contract now complete, we are very proud of the many successes we achieved with the Digital Ready program.



## Engagement and outreach

### **INDIGENOUS FOCUS DAY AND BROADBAND FOR THE BUSH FORUM**

ACCAN was on the organising committee for, and attended the Indigenous Focus Day and Broadband for the Bush Forum in Fremantle in June, 2017. The Indigenous Focus Day resulted in a comprehensive list of key findings and policy recommendations. At the Forum, ACCAN delivered an address, chaired a digital inclusion session, and ran a workshop on the Customer Service Guarantee.

### **FINANCIAL COUNSELLING AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE**

ACCAN attended the Financial Counselling Australia national conference on the Gold Coast in May, 2017. Over 600 delegates and 40 exhibitors attended, representing financial counsellors, telecommunications and utilities companies, government, and others. ACCAN's exhibitor stand was a success. Delegates were very interested in ACCAN's Top tips brochures.

### **YABUN FESTIVAL**

ACCAN held a stall at the annual Yabun Festival, held on 26 January, 2017 in Sydney. Yabun is the largest one day gathering and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia. The ACCAN stall had many visitors throughout the day who were interested in hearing about their consumer rights.

### **ACOSS CONFERENCE**

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) Conference was held in Sydney in November, 2016. The theme of the Conference was 'Leading the big debates' and it addressed issues affecting people who are experiencing poverty and inequality. ACCAN held a stall at the Conference where we distributed our Top tips brochures and information on our research and Hardship Portal.

### **SACOSS CONFERENCE**

In November, 2016, ACCAN's Director of Policy delivered a presentation at the SACOSS Vulnerability & Affordability Conference 2016: Energy, Water & Telecommunications. A joint research project between ACCAN and SACOSS was also launched at the event.

### **ICPA CONFERENCE**

ACCAN attended the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Conference in Perth in August, 2016. This was an opportunity to do some outreach in Western Australia with regional and remote consumers. Telecommunications issues were extensively covered at the Conference.

### **NSW FARMERS CONFERENCE**

NSW Farmers held its annual Conference in July, 2016 in Sydney. The theme for the Conference was 'Innovation in agriculture.' ACCAN's stall at the Conference allowed us to engage with farmers who run small businesses.



# 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 Executive Council
12. Communications Alliance Integrated Public Number Database Code Working Group
13. Communications Alliance Mobile Premium Services Code Working Committee
14. Communications Alliance Handling of Life Threatening and Unwelcome Communications Code Working Committee
15. Department of Communications and the Arts Stay Safe Online Week Steering Group
16. Global Access Partners/Department of Communications and the Arts National Standing Committee on Digital Engagement
17. Internet of Things Alliance of Australia Executive Council
18. International Telecommunications Users Group Board
19. NBN Quarterly Marketing Group
20. NBN Wholesale Broadband Agreement Consumer Forum
21. NBN Product Development Forum
22. National Forum on Emergency Warnings to the Community
23. National Relay Service National Advisory Committee
24. NSW Information and Privacy Advisory Committee
25. Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Consumer Privacy Network
26. Standards Australia JTC 1 Advisory Committee
27. Standards Australia IT 040 ICT Accessibility
28. Standards Australia Chairpersons Advisory Group
29. Standards Australia COPOLCO Mirror Standing Advisory Committee
30. Standards Australia Council
31. Standards Australia Nomination Organisations Forum
32. Telstra CEO and Consumer Roundtable
33. Telstra Digital Inclusion Index Advisory Committee
34. Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Critical Friends Group
35. Service NSW Hearing Assistance Procurement Panel



## Consultation

### MEMBERS STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

On 6 June, 2017, ACCAN held a strategic planning workshop with members to get feedback on ACCAN's direction and to discuss a Strategic Plan for 2017-2022.

The workshop was highly productive and was attended by representatives from Consumers' Federation of Australia, SACOSS, First People's Disability Network, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, COTA Australia, Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, National Council of Women of Australia, Women's Legal Service NSW, National Farmers' Federation, Isolated Children's Parents' Association, CARE Inc and the Australian Privacy Foundation.

### 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 28 September, 2016. Representatives from Vision Australia, Deaf Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, People with Disability Australia, First People's Disability Network and Achieve Australia attended the meeting.

### 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 4 August, 2016. Representatives from the Indigenous Remote Communications Association, National Centre for Indigenous Excellence, Hitnet and Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media attended the meeting.

### 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 on 27 July, 2016. Representatives from 2508+ Disconnected, COSBOA, COTA ACT, Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner, NSW Farmers and Kiama Community College attended the meeting.

### REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE ADVISORY FORUM

An advisory forum was convened with regional, rural and remote consumers to examine the unique issues being faced by these consumers.

This meeting was held on 21 October, 2016. Representatives from AgForce Queensland, Broadband for the Bush Alliance, Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia, Cotton Australia, Country Women's Association of NSW, Isolated Children's Parents' Association, National Farmers' Federation, NSW Farmers and the Regional Development Institute attended the meeting.



# Submissions

ACCAN made a number of submissions to government, regulatory and other inquiries in 2016-17. Most of our submissions can be found online at: [www.accan.org.au/submissions](http://www.accan.org.au/submissions)

## JULY 2016

- Productivity Commission, Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation
- ACMA, Review of the captioning obligations in the Broadcasting Services Act 1992
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, comments on Draft Guide to Big Data and Privacy
- Productivity Commission, Data Availability and Use Inquiry
- ACCC, Wholesale ADSL declaration inquiry

## AUGUST 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Consultation on remaking Do Not Call Register Regulations
- Digital Transformation Office, Ongoing consultation on trusted digital identity framework
- ACCC, Consultation on broadband speed claims
- ACCC, nbn Special Access Undertaking variation
- Productivity Commission, Consumer Law Enforcement and Administration

## SEPTEMBER 2016

- Communications Alliance, Draft Connect Outstanding Code DR C617:2016
- Department of Communications and the Arts, Review of Part XIB telecommunications anti-competitive conduct provisions

## OCTOBER 2016

- Communications Alliance, Scheduled review of Mobile Premium Services (MPS) Code 2016
- ACCC, Communications Sector Market Study Issues Paper
- ACCC, SBAS and LBAS Fixed Access Determination discussion paper

## NOVEMBER 2016

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Consumer representation: Review of s.593 Telecommunications Act 1997
- nbn Product Development Forum (PDF), Satellite mobility service
- nbn PDF, CVC Pricing Industry Consultation Paper
- ACCC, Domestic Mobile Roaming Inquiry

## DECEMBER 2016

- ACMA, Prepaid ID checking draft determination
- nbn PDF, Fibre to the Curb
- Consumer Affairs Australia and New Zealand, Australian Consumer Law Interim Report
- Productivity Commission, Data Availability and Use Draft Report

## JANUARY 2017

- Attorney-General's Department, Access to Telecommunications Data in Civil Proceedings
- Productivity Commission, Draft report on the Universal Service Obligation
- Australian Government Treasury, Pre-budget 2017-18 consultation
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, ICT Procurement Taskforce
- ACMA, Remaking the Telecommunications IPND Scheme

## FEBRUARY 2017

- Department of Communications and the Arts, Telecommunications Reform Package

## MARCH 2017

- Joint Parliamentary Committee on the NBN Inquiry
- Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs, Delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

## APRIL 2017

- ACCC, Broadband speed claims principles and guidance
- ACCC, NBN Co Special Access Undertaking variation, draft decision

## MAY 2017

- ACMA, Draft Captioning exemption and target reduction orders
- ACMA, Draft Captioning exemption and target reduction orders for Fetch TV
- ACMA, Feedback on proposed educational captioning video project

## JUNE 2017

- nbn PDF, Pricing Evolution
- ACCC, Domestic Mobile Roaming Draft Decision
- Communications Alliance, Draft Industry Managed Numbering Plan
- Cameron Ralph Khoury Consultants, Independent Review of the TIO
- Fundraising Institute of Australia, Community sector feedback on draft Code and Practice notes on charity telemarketing calls



**UNA LAWRENCE**  
DIRECTOR OF POLICY



**RACHEL THOMAS**  
SENIOR POLICY ADVISER

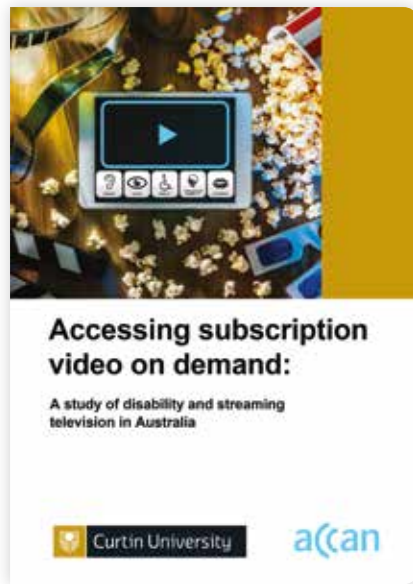


**WAYNE HAWKINS**  
DISABILITY POLICY ADVISOR



**JEREMY RIDDLE**  
POLICY OFFICER





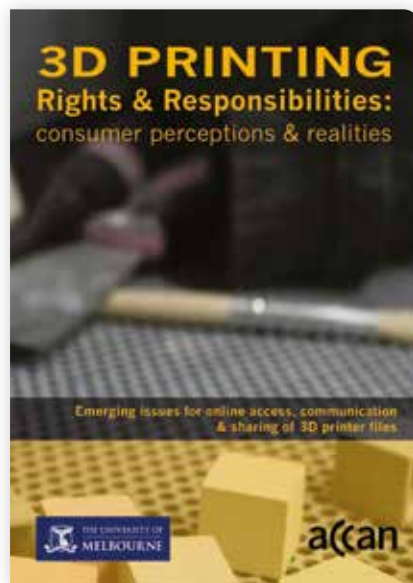
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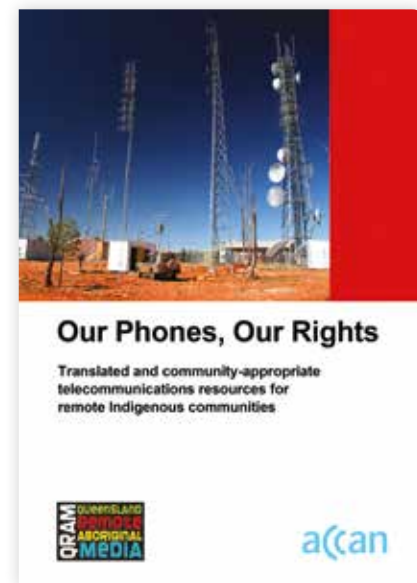
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## Research

**TANYA KARLIYCHUK**  
GRANTS AND RESEARCH OFFICER

These research projects were commissioned and/or completed by ACCAN in order to ensure a robust evidence base for raising consumer concerns and are separate from the ACCAN Grants Scheme.

### SOCIAL HOUSING AND BROADBAND

ACCAN and Infoxchange produced a report focusing on the more than 427,000 dwellings (about five per cent of housing stock) in Australia which fall into the category of social housing. Residents of social housing are more likely to fall on the wrong side of the digital divide, and face a range of barriers in getting connected. This research surveyed residents and stakeholders to better understand the demand for broadband in social housing and assessed the affordability and suitability of current broadband offers for social housing residents.

### CONFIDENT, BUT CONFOUNDED

ACCAN worked with Dr Paul Harrison (Deakin University) to examine the extent to which consumers understand the information provided to them by telecommunications providers. The work found a number of fascinating features of consumer decision making and made recommendations on how information should be presented to consumers when purchasing phone and internet services.

### CONNECTIVITY COSTS

In this study by SACOSS, over 500 Centrelink recipients

were surveyed to identify the importance of telecommunications, and assess the issues associated with the cost of getting and staying connected. A series of focus groups were also conducted. The research assessed the extent of the communications 'poverty premium' for low-income consumers, including the role this plays in preventing low-income consumers from choosing the services that best suit their needs.

### SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY

In 2016, ACCAN undertook a survey of small business operators to provide an insight into the most prevalent telecommunications issues affecting small business in Australia. The survey looked at the experience of 100 small businesses and found that 96 per cent had experienced at least one issue with their telecommunications services.

### ADSL AVAILABILITY MAP AND UPDATE

Following the success of the first ADSL availability map created for ACCAN in 2016, an update was commissioned in early 2017 to incorporate newly released data from Telstra, nbn and the Department of Communications and the Arts. By inputting their address into the map, consumers can identify if their area may be unable to get an ADSL service, potential reasons why, and when these areas will have services over NBN.



## AS AT 30 JUNE, 2017.

2508+Disconnected  
 Aadmi Co  
 Able Australia  
 Achieve Australia  
 ACT Council of Social Service  
 Adult Learning Australia  
 Australian Communication Exchange  
 Australian Council of Social Service  
 Australian Federation of Deaf Societies  
 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations  
 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 Inc.  
 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 Association of Victoria  
 Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW  
 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  
 COTA Australia  
 COTA WA  
 Cotton Australia  
 Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia  
 Country Women's Association of Australia  
 Deaf Australia  
 Deaf Children Australia  
 Deaf NT  
 Deaf Society of NSW  
 Deafness Forum of Australia  
 Desert Knowledge Australia  
 Differently Abled People Association  
 Digital Tasmania  
 Electronic Frontiers Australia  
 Ethnic Communities Council of WA  
 Family Drug Support  
 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia  
 Financial and Consumer Rights Council  
 Financial Counselling Australia  
 Financial Counsellors Association of Queensland  
 Financial Rights Legal Centre  
 Health Consumers of Rural & Remote Australia  
 Hitnet  
 Homelessness Australia  
 IDEAS NSW  
 IEEE Society for the Social Implications of Technology (SSIT) – Australia Chapter  
 Illawarra Legal Centre  
 Inclusive UX  
 Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network  
 Indigenous Remote Communications Association  
 Infoxchange  
 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  
 Leep  
 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  
 National Farmers' Federation  
 Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre  
 Novita Children's Services  
 NSW Farmers  
 Parawa Agricultural Bureau  
 People with Disabilities WA  
 People with Disability Australia  
 Physical Disability Australia  
 Physical Disability Council of NSW  
 Public Interest Advocacy Centre  
 Queensland Consumers Association  
 Queensland Council of Social Service  
 Redfern Legal Centre  
 South Australian Financial Counsellors Association  
 Streetspeed Australia  
 Swinburne Institute for Social Research  
 Tasmanian Deaf Society  
 Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc.  
 Tenants Queensland  
 Think+DO Tank Foundation  
 Vision Australia  
 W.O.W! - Willing Older Workers Incorporated  
 Wamboin Communications Action Group  
 Western Australian Deaf Society  
 Westjustice  
 Westwood Spice  
 Women with Disabilities Australia  
 Women's Legal Services Australia  
 Women's Legal Services NSW  
 Youth Affairs Network of Queensland



**JOHANNA PLANTE (CHAIR)**  
 Joined: September 2014  
 Term ends: September 2017



**DEAN BARTON-SMITH**  
 Joined: September 2016  
 Term expires: September 2019



**CHRIS DODDS**  
 Joined: September 2014  
 Term ends: September 2017



**SANDRA MILLIGAN**  
 Joined: September 2015  
 Term expires: September 2018



**NADIA MOFFAT**  
 Joined: September 2016  
 Term expires: September 2019



**VICTORIA RUBENSOHN**  
 Joined: September 2014  
 Term expires: September 2017



**RYAN SENGARA**  
 Joined: September 2015  
 Term expires: September 2018



**NIGEL WATERS**  
 Joined: September 2014  
 Term expires: September 2017



**SARAH WILSON**  
 Joined: September 2016  
 Term expires: September 2019