

ACCAN Economic Regulation Quarterly Progress Report

Period: 1 April – 30 June 2025

All activities undertaken within this report represent ACCAN's actions to meet the objectives and intended outcomes of the Funding Agreement (**the Grant**) signed by the Minister for Communications on 5 November 2024. As stated in the Grant, the objectives and intended outcomes are to:

- provide funding to allow ACCAN to participate in Special Access Undertaking (**SAU**) activities including NBN Co's consultation on the company's Replacement Module Application (**RMA**).
- enable the SAU to support the long-term interests of end-users through the provision of consumer perspectives from ACCAN.

Specifically, ACCAN's activities are part of its efforts to ensure consumers are represented during the **pre-lodgement consultation and input** stage of the regulatory reset process, chiefly through ACCAN's participation in NBN Co's Regulatory Proposal Forum (**RPF**). Other activities are part of our efforts to equip ACCAN with the necessary strategy and resources to undertake **post-lodgement consultation and input**, in which a significant bulk of activity is expected for Q1 FY25-26.

Activity 1 – Represent the views and interests of telecommunications consumers from a range of sectors.

Since the approval of the SAU Variation in October 2023, ACCAN has worked closely with our membership and sector stakeholders, as well as with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (**the Department**) to ensure that consumers are effectively represented throughout this regulatory reset process.

To this end, ACCAN has widely consulted with its membership base and undertaken preparatory research to inform our consumer representation. We have further been a highly active participant in the RPF, using our expertise to ensure that NBN Co's expenditure proposals and work programmes are informed by consumer interest, with regard for low-income, First Nations, and regional, rural and remote (**RRR**) consumers.

ACCAN's chief contributions to the now concluded RPF process include:

- Hosting independent sessions of the RPF to ensure effective 'out of session' discussion among panellists.
- Drafting and editing significant contributions to the final RPF report alongside panel colleagues.
- Maintaining and submitting a 'question tracker' as an attachment to the final report to ensure effective representation of RPF member views.

Activity 2 – Provide funding for representation projects and/or conduct research into social, economic, environmental or technological implications of developments relating to telecommunications.

ACCAN has commissioned work from FTI Consulting, covering four key areas of the RMA process:

- Workstream 1: Review of Service Standards
- Workstream 2: Price Control Methodology
- Workstream 3: Benchmark Demand Forecast
- Workstream 4: Satellite Broadband Services

ACCAN and FTI have completed work on the four key workstreams and are now developing public-facing materials to support engagement with members, stakeholders and consumers as part of the forthcoming public consultation on the RMA.

FTI will be undertaking further analytical work to support ACCAN's engagement with the RMA following the publication of the relevant documentation by the ACCC, as part of the public consultation process.

Activity 3 – Educate consumers and organisations on telecommunications issues.

ACCAN is committed to a regulatory reset process that meets the needs of all Australian consumers. To ensure that ACCAN members as well as non-member stakeholders and general consumers are effectively represented within this regulatory reset process, ACCAN is currently developing a stakeholder engagement and community consultation plan for August and September 2025.

ACCAN is finalising the engagement of a community consultancy firm – Cred Consulting – to assist with our engagement. Cred are an experienced community engagement firm with experience in infrastructure and digital inclusion projects. Cred's best practice approach will support ACCAN to deliver on its proposed community engagement agenda, which includes:

- Hosting three end-user focus group panels with individuals from a) rural and remote, b) regional, and c) metropolitan areas.
- In-person travel to liaise with stakeholders and representative groups in Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra and regional NSW.
- Development of further targeted questions as part of a supplementary survey/s to be undertaken in association with ACCAN's consumer sentiment tracker to assess the degree to which components of the NBN RMA align with consumer preferences and priorities.

ACCAN expects to share more about its public-facing communications and consumer consultation in Q1 FY25-26.

Activity 4 – Develop and maintain effective and productive relationships with stakeholders.

ACCAN has continued to engage extensively with NBN Co through active attendance at its scheduled panel sessions, observing its end-user panel meetings, as well as our regulatory scheduled bilateral meetings. In addition, ACCAN has continued to be an active member of the Low Income and Digital Inclusion Forum, ensuring that there are consumer voices throughout NBN Co's consultation processes. ACCAN also continues to meet regularly with the Department, briefing the Broadband and Emerging Communications Branch on ACCAN participation at NBN Co events as well as providing regular reporting updates. ACCAN further meets regularly with RPF colleagues, hosting independent meetings as well as communicating informally to discuss specific issues of concern. In addition, we meet with core stakeholders who may be affected by particular matters being discussed in the RPF, such as representatives of RRR communities, to ensure that their needs are being met in the engagement process.

ACCAN is currently developing a stakeholder engagement plan to advance throughout this calendar year, to inform our submissions to the ACCC as part of the RMA. During the expected community consultation period in August – September of 2025, ACCAN plans to visit our member and non-member stakeholders and gather qualitative and quantitative evidence on the consumer experience with the nbn.

Activity 5 – Maintain sound governance and reporting arrangements

ACCAN has established appropriate internal governance arrangements to promote effective oversight of the economic regulation project. To this end, ACCAN's board has established a committee of economic regulation to provide expert advice and guidance on ad-hoc developments, ensuring that ACCAN staff deliver against their goal of effectively representing consumer interests in the economic regulation of NBN Co. ACCAN has further created an individual project budget in order to effectively monitor and administer the Australian Government's financial grant.

ACCAN has established appropriate reporting arrangements with the Department to promote transparency and accountability of our activities under the grant. In agreement with the Department, ACCAN has established monthly meetings with Department officials to track the progress of the grant and report back on ACCAN consumer engagement activities and participation in the RPF. In addition, ACCAN has established quarterly financial reporting arrangements as per the agreement with the Department, to ensure effective oversight and the smooth operation of the grant.

ACCAN will continue to upload quarterly reports of its activities to its website - <https://www.accan.org.au/accanconsumernbn> - to ensure that its activities are transparent and accessible by relevant stakeholders, including government, industry and the general public.

Activity 6 – Proactively and positively engaging with the media

As ACCAN's activities continued to be contained within the commercial-in-confidence nature of the Regulatory Proposal Forum, we have had minimal engagement with the media to date. We note that following the publication of our Executive Summary of Consultation Paper 2 onto ACCAN's website, that this was taken up by the Communications Day industry publication which reported the headline findings (12 May 2025).

ACCAN is developing a media and community engagement strategy in Q4 (April – June) to implement following NBN Co's lodgement of the RMA by 2 July 2025, with the concurrent finalisation of the RPF. ACCAN expects to promote aspects of the project in local and community media as part of our broader consultation strategy, expected to be implemented over August – September 2025 (Q1 + Q2 FY26).

Activity 7 – National Consumer Sentiment Survey

ACCAN's next wave for its nationally representative consumer sentiment survey will include question on the NBN proposal. As part of ACCAN's existing arrangement with Essential Media, topical questions will be run in addition to the second wave of the core consumer tracker.