2025-26



accan

OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR

ANNUAL REPORT



Australian Communications Consumer Action Network Limited (ACCAN)

ABN 42 133 719 678
ISSN 1838-5397

For the year ended 30 June 2026

This work is copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for study or training purposes subject to the inclusion of an acknowledgement of the source. It may not be reproduced for commercial usage or sale. Reproduction for purposes other than those indicated above requires written permission from ACCAN.

© ACCAN 2026

This document can be found on the ACCAN website:
www.accan.org.au/annualreports

www.accan.org.au
www.twitter.com/ACCAN_AU
www.facebook.com/accanau
www.linkedIn.com/company/accanau
www.instagram.com/accan_au/

Contact ACCAN:

Address: PO Box A1158 Sydney South, NSW 1235
Email: info@accan.org.au
Phone: (02) 9288 4000

You can contact ACCAN through the **National Relay Service:**
www.relayservice.gov.au

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Who we are

5 Chair report

7 CEO report

12 What our advocacy delivered

13 ACCAN in the media

15 Policy and advocacy

19 Submissions

22 Key milestones

24 A consumer voice for the NBN

26 Research and grants

30 ACCAN - Accessible Telecoms

31 ACCAN Members

33 ACCAN Board

ACCAN

WHO WE ARE



OUR VISION

Trusted, accessible, inclusive, affordable and available communications and digital services for all Australians.

OUR MISSION

To advocate for, represent, support and inform consumers to deliver better outcomes.

OUR VALUES

Courageous	We are unafraid in speaking out for consumers and proposing policy solutions.
Transparent	We openly share our policy views.
Collaborative	We work constructively with all stakeholders to achieve results for consumers.
Future-focused	We are forward-looking and evidence-informed.
Inclusive	We strive to represent all consumers in Australia and act on particular issues for vulnerable groups.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1. **National leadership in consumer communications advocacy and awareness**
2. **National leadership in policy and research**
3. **Collaboration and coalition building**
4. **Organisational capacity and resilience**

CHAIR REPORT



Vince Humphries
Chairperson

On behalf of the ACCAN Board, I am pleased to report on the work ACCAN has undertaken over 2025-26.

It has been a demanding year for the consumers ACCAN represents, and a significant one for the organisation. Serious failures in essential communications services placed the consumer interest at the centre of national debate. In a year like this, the value of an independent, evidence-led consumer voice is paramount. I am proud of the way ACCAN met that responsibility and demonstrated leadership in a sector that seemed at times devoid of this quality.

The Board's role through such a period is to ensure the organisation remains well-governed, financially sound, and true to its purpose, so that our executive and staff can do their work with confidence. I am satisfied that ACCAN is in a strong position on these measures, and the governance improvements we have made this year have strengthened that foundation further.

The Board periodically reviews aspects of our constitution to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose. A series of amendments were brought forward for members' consideration at the 2025 Annual General Meeting. These included procedural clarifications to support good governance, and the introduction of a maximum overall director term limit of nine years. This change reflects contemporary expectations of board renewal in the not-for-profit sector. I thank members for their engagement with these reforms.

5.3 million
Scams Awareness Week video views

821K
Total social media reach across all platforms

ADVOCACY

46
Submissions made

4
Op-eds in major newspapers

7
Grants powered

At the Annual General Meeting on 22 October 2025, we welcomed three new Directors to the Board: Amber Marshall, Ron Ben-David and Tess Matthews. Each brings valuable experience that will strengthen ACCAN's governance and deepen our understanding of the communities we serve. I was also pleased to see Bobbie Blackson appointed as Deputy Chairperson, and was humbled to be reappointed as Chairperson. At that AGM, we also farewelled Jess Wilson, Chris Dodds and Keith Besgrove, with Delia Rickard finishing her time on the Board in May. I thank them for the contribution they made and the insight they lent the organisation during their time on the Board.

I extend the Board's thanks to the Hon Anika Wells MP, Minister for Communications, and to her department, for their ongoing engagement with ACCAN throughout the year. Much of the reform we have seen this year depended on a government willing to act for the Australian consumer, and we appreciate the constructive relationship we continue to share.

ACCAN's work this year has once again been made possible by the support of the Australian Government through the Telecommunications Industry Levy, which underpins our capacity to represent consumers across the breadth of issues affecting them. The Board is grateful for this ongoing support, and mindful of the responsibility it carries.

I also acknowledge the significant funded work ACCAN has continued to deliver, including our role representing consumers in the economic regulation of the NBN - complex, detailed work that will shape pricing and service standards for households for years to come - and our Independent Grants Program, which again supported research of real value to consumers.

To our members: thank you. Your advice, expertise and collaboration are at the heart of ACCAN's advocacy, and the organisation is stronger for the trust you place in it.

Finally, I want to thank our CEO, Carol Bennett, and every member of the ACCAN staff team. This has been a year that asked a great deal of them, and they have met it with skill, resilience and an unwavering focus on the people they serve. On behalf of the Board, I offer them our sincere thanks.

> *In a year like this, the value of an independent, evidence-led consumer voice is paramount. I am proud of the way ACCAN met that responsibility and demonstrated leadership...*



ACCAN executive and Board at the 2025 Annual General Meeting

CEO REPORT



Carol Bennett
CEO

I am pleased to present ACCAN's Annual Report for 2025–26.

Two years into my time as CEO, I remain struck by how completely Australians depend on communications services, and how poorly the framework governing that sector reflects it. A phone connection is now how people work, care for their families, manage a budget or a business, consult a doctor, and reach help in an emergency. It is an essential service in every practical sense. Too often, the regulatory and legislative framework around it doesn't treat it that way.

ACCAN's work this year has focused on closing that gap: strengthening the rules, improving consumer outcomes, and holding the telco sector to the standard the public expects of an essential service. We lead with evidence — commissioned research, empirical review and consumer experience — and our advocacy is aimed squarely at solutions that improve outcomes for consumers.



Speaking at the the Safety by Design conference alongside Hannah Tonkin (NSW Department of Communities and Justice), Gerard Brody (Essential Services Commission) and Micaela Cronin (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission)

ACCAN's advocacy informed a number of significant outcomes for consumers this year, including:

- New outages registers, giving consumers transparency on when and where outages occur.
- A new coverage map methodology, requiring telcos to report on coverage claims uniformly and more honestly.
- Reformed pricing for expiring spectrum licences, reflecting a more rigorous process that better values this finite public asset and makes allocation decisions in other bands more transparent and accountable.
- An NBN reset, with ACCAN-funded work driving a significant uplift in regulation across benchmark service standards, entry-level offer plans and expenditure — outcomes that should mean better value and more reliable services for households in the years ahead.
- Evidence and policy input to multiple Triple Zero inquiries, including the Senate Committee reviewing the Optus outage, which broadened to cover network reliability, domestic mobile roaming and automatic compensation. ACCAN also informed the Triple Zero Custodian's ecosystem review of the service.
- Representation of telecommunications consumers in developing the Scams Prevention Framework, including the codes established under it.
- Input to legislative and parliamentary processes, including the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation, which will deliver satellite-to-device technology as a connectivity safety net, and the Enhancing Consumer Safety legislation, which will enhance the powers and penalties available to the regulator and maintain a register of all mobile network operators for accountability.



Carol Bennett with Minister for Communications Anika Wells

This work took many forms — written submissions, presentations to inquiries and conferences, and extensive media engagement — and it took place against a difficult backdrop. This was a year defined by a collapse in trust: telecommunications is now the most distrusted sector in the Australian economy, ahead of pharmaceuticals, mining, real estate and even gambling. That standing reflects a long decline in the reliability and accessibility of services, built up over years of consumers being told one thing and experiencing another, by a sector too often more focused on managing messaging than fixing faults. It will not be rebuilt quickly.

The clearest expression of this was the repeated failure of Triple Zero. In September, a catastrophic Optus outage left hundreds of Australians unable to reach emergency help and has been linked to two deaths. Further outages followed months later, along with a fault affecting Triple Zero access on older handsets, amid sustained parliamentary scrutiny of how a service this fundamental could keep failing. No amount of reassurance makes up for an emergency service that did not work when it was needed most.

ACCAN's own consumer engagement had already identified the need for public outages registers. When the registers finally launched in June 2026, they confirmed what consumers and our members had been telling us.



Consumer advocates at the National Press Club: (L-R) Dr Domenique Meyrick, Erin Turner, Ciara Sterling, Carol Bennett and Stephanie Tonkin

Questions of reliability and reform will continue well into next financial year, but real change is already underway: new oversight of the Triple Zero system, new transparency on outages and coverage, and a genuine review of the settings underpinning emergency communications. That progress reflects evidence too strong to ignore, public expectations far removed from current delivery, and the consistent, persistent case made by ACCAN, our members and the wider consumer movement - in public, in submissions, in meetings, and in Parliament.

That same process - evidence, policy development and sustained advocacy - underpinned much of our work this year.

> We lead with evidence – commissioned research, empirical review and consumer experience – and our advocacy is aimed squarely at solutions that improve outcomes for consumers.

Our long campaign against a weak, industry-drafted Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code was ultimately successful, with the ACMA accepting that the TCP Code provide inadequate community safeguards.

ACCAN ultimately secured direct regulation of practices including aggressive sales and predatory credit conduct that has caused real harm to the people least able to absorb it. The decision from the ACMA overturns decades of self-regulation under the Telecommunications Act 1997 in favour of regulation appropriate to an essential service in the public interest. I thank the members of our Fair Call Coalition, who championed this outcome tirelessly in the face of strong industry pushback.

Spectrum - the licensed radio-frequency bands government allocates for wireless transmission, and the underlying resource mobile and satellite services depend on - was another major focus this year. ACCAN pushed for a process that delivers public benefit while allowing Australia to capture the advantages of new technology.



Carol Bennett with ACT Senator David Pocock

Our research also showed strong consumer support for domestic mobile roaming, which allows a phone to connect to any available network when its own has failed, and would deliver a more competitive market and greater choice, particularly in regional Australia. Momentum behind it is building, with growing support across a range of groups.

Affordability remains a persistent concern. Prices have risen well above inflation even as providers report healthy profits, and consumers consistently tell us they want lower-priced, more accessible services.

ACCAN seized opportunities to drive outcomes in telecommunications this year, but we were also active on related fronts: digital competition and AI, a supporting role in Australia's world-first ban on social media for under-16s, and legislative reform on privacy and unfair trading practices, working alongside our consumer colleagues.

Further achievements from the year include:

- 46 policy submissions and representation across committees and inquiries
- 5,660 media mentions and 241 press interviews
- Delivery of the Future of Australia's NBN consumer engagement report
- Launch of the Consumer Sentiment Tracker project

The task of securing reliable, accessible communications for Australians remains ahead of us, and it will only grow more important.

All of our work is grounded in consultation and collaboration with our members and stakeholders, and I thank everyone who has provided the foundation for it.

Further achievements from the year

DELIVERED

The Future of Australia's NBN consumer engagement report

LAUNCHED

The Consumer Sentiment Tracker research suite

I also thank the ACCAN team for the depth and consistency of their work this year — considerable for an organisation of our size.

I commend the ACCAN Board for its proactive strengthening of our governance and strategic oversight. I am fortunate to work with such an informed, skilled and supportive Board, led by our Chair, Vince Humphries, whose steady guidance and support I've valued throughout a demanding year.

The challenges ahead won't ease in a fast-changing technological world where communications touch every part of Australians' lives. ACCAN embraces that challenge and remains committed to the reform needed to bring the telecommunications sector into line with the standard of an essential service. Australians deserve communications services that are fit for purpose, accessible and affordable. ACCAN will accept nothing less.

ACCESS AND COMMUNITY

100K+

People who used Accessible Telecoms

79

Organisational members

68

Individual members



ACCAN senior staff with Tristan Gilbertson, Andrew Young, Monica Collier and Toni Shuker from the New Zealand Commerce Commission

WHAT OUR ADVOCACY DELIVERED

ACCAN's advocacy informed a number of significant outcomes for consumers this year.

OUTAGES REGISTERS

New outages registers, giving consumers transparency on when and where outages occur - and what caused them.

COVERAGE MAPS

A new coverage map methodology, requiring telcos to report on coverage claims uniformly and more honestly.

SPECTRUM PRICING

Reformed pricing for expiring spectrum licences, reflecting a more rigorous process that better values this finite public asset and makes allocation decisions in other bands more transparent and accountable.

Value and Reliability

NBN reset

An NBN reset, with ACCAN-funded work driving a significant uplift in regulation across benchmark service standards, entry-level offer plans and expenditure — outcomes that should mean better value and more reliable services for households in the years ahead.

Safety and Protection

TRIPLE ZERO

Evidence and policy input to multiple Triple Zero reviews and inquiries, including the Senate Committee into the Triple Zero service outage, which broadened to cover network reliability, domestic mobile roaming and automatic compensation. ACCAN also informed the Triple Zero Custodian's Triple Zero Legislative and Regulatory Review.

SCAMS

Representation of telecommunications consumers in developing the Scams Prevention Framework, including the codes established under it.

PARLIAMENTARY INPUT

Input to legislative and parliamentary processes, including the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation, which will deliver satellite-to-device technology as a connectivity safety net, and the Enhancing Consumer Safeguards legislation, which will enhance the powers and penalties available to the regulator and maintain a register of all mobile network operators for accountability.

ACCAN IN THE MEDIA

ACCAN's public and media engagement reached new heights this year, driven by a communications sector rarely out of the national headlines and concerted efforts to be a mainstay in the public domain.

We provided 241 interviews or comments to the press across the financial year, spanning television, radio, print and online platforms, and were mentioned 5660 times in the media over the same period. This reflects a significant uplift from last financial year, and more than double the media mentions in FY24-25



Carol Bennett with A Current Affair host Ally Langdon

It was a year in which the consumer voice was in constant demand. The Triple Zero failures that unfolded from September onwards placed ACCAN at the centre of sustained national coverage, with our CEO Carol Bennett appearing across A Current Affair, the ABC's 7.30 and AM programs, Nine News, the Today Show, Sky News, and in the pages of the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, the Herald Sun and The Guardian, among many others. As the story evolved - from the initial Optus outage to device compatibility faults and the parliamentary scrutiny that followed - ACCAN was consistently sought out to explain what had gone wrong and what needed to change.

Other issues drew heavy coverage throughout the year. CEO, Carol Bennett provided regular comment and authored opinion pieces on the management of Australia's spectrum assets, the affordability of mobile and internet services amid repeated above-inflation price rises, the standardisation of mobile coverage maps, and the case for domestic mobile roaming. ACCAN's Consumer Sentiment Tracker generated significant coverage in its own right, particularly its findings on emergency-call reliability.

It is clear that ACCAN is increasingly relied upon as a trusted, expert voice for consumers on communications issues. A number of journalists and newsrooms now turn to us as a matter of course whenever a communications issue rises to prominence - a reflection of the credibility and consistency of our advocacy.

5,660

media mentions

More than double FY24–25

241

interviews and comments across TV, radio, print and online

51

media releases

ACCAN issued 51 media releases across the year, covering research findings, policy reform calls, consumer protections, digital competition, scams awareness and responses to industry conduct.

Our social media presence continued to grow across our major platforms, adding more than 1,300 followers over the year. Our Instagram following more than doubled and is now our fastest-growing channel; our LinkedIn community grew by almost a third to more than 2,500; and our Facebook audience passed 2,100. Facebook proved especially powerful for reaching beyond our community, generating more than 280,000 video views across the year, the overwhelming majority from people who do not yet follow us. Engagement deepened as well as widened.

The year's strongest social media moments mirrored our media agenda. Content on the Triple Zero failures, domestic mobile roaming and the affordability of communications services consistently drove our highest reach and engagement, and our Consumer Sentiment Tracker research travelled well beyond our own audience. A short video featuring Senator David Pocock became our best-performing post of the year with more than 40,000 views, and collaborations with partners and parliamentarians - including a widely viewed post with Senator Fatima Payman - extended our message well beyond our own following, underlining the value of ACCAN's collaborative approach on social media.

Looking to the year ahead, we see clear opportunity in short-form video and in more human, direct and to-camera engagement from our CEO, staff and consumers. Short videos consistently delivered our widest reach this year, while our in-depth carousels remained the strongest format for explaining submissions and policy and for driving engagement - a complementary pairing of reach and depth we will build on.



Carol Bennett at a press conference with Senator for Western Australia, Fatima Payman

INSTAGRAM

2X

Following more than doubled — our fastest-growing channel

LINKEDIN

2,500+

Community grew by almost a third

FACEBOOK

2,100+

Audience — and our strongest channel for reaching new people

280K+

Facebook video views — the overwhelming majority from people who don't yet follow us

40K+

Views on our best-performing post: a short video featuring Senator David Pocock

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

During the 2025–26 financial year, ACCAN's Policy Team contributed to numerous consultations, roundtables, forums and legislative processes across all three enduring priority areas. Our advocacy has focused on ensuring communications services are affordable, reliable and accessible, reflecting the increasingly essential nature of connectivity to Australian consumers.

ACCAN welcomed the introduction of the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation legislation (UOMO Bill) into Parliament, which aims to provide a baseline of reliable mobile connectivity across Australia. Frequent and significant mobile outages, including multiple national outages in the past year alone, have underscored the importance of the UOMO framework, the urgency of its passage through Parliament, and the need for swift implementation of its obligations. Our submission to the exposure draft legislation called for minimum service standards that could evolve with technology and consumer expectations. Enabling provisions to support the Minister to make minimum standards before UOMO commences were subsequently included in the Bill, however we continue to call for broader standards to hold providers to account for reliability across their networks.



ACCAN executive with Senator Varun Ghosh



ACCAN Policy Officer Rebekah Palmer with EARG members at Global Summit on Economic Abuse as part of International Coalition Against Economic Abuse, October 2025

ACCAN's policy work has gleaned mentions during the Bill's passage through the House of Representatives, including by Dr Helen Haines MP, Llew O'Brien MP, Anne Urquhart MP and Alison Penfold MP.

ACCAN continued intensive work on the Expiring Spectrum Licenses process and the lengthy consultation run by the ACMA on this issue. ACCAN has consistently advocated for decisions on spectrum licences to be made transparently, informed by consumer perspectives and in the public interest. Whilst we were disappointed in the ACMA's decision not to undertake an auction process and to roll-over expiring licences instead, ACCAN remained engaged with the process, and continued to advocate for the consumer interest. The final figure of $7.32 billion - while over $2 billion more than the ACMA's initial estimate - still represents a discount, in real and nominal terms, on the last time licenses were renewed.

ACCAN's policy work continues to call for reduced spectrum prices to come with a requirement for coverage obligations, and for savings to be passed onto consumers through reduced retail prices. Looking ahead, ACCAN will engage with the spectrum allocation process for the 2GHz MSS band – the regulatory decisions made on this issue now will impact Australian consumers well into the future.

ACCAN's policy work over the past year has also encompassed the establishment of an Outages Register, a critical transparency and public safety measure we had long advocated for, as well as new obligations on telecommunications providers to publish consistent coverage maps. While we continue to identify ways these measures could be improved, both reforms represent significant steps forward, consumers can now compare the coverage of telcos using clear and consistent mapping processes, and telcos are now required to publish clear details of outages they experience on their networks.



Carol Bennett and Chloe Andrews (ACCAN Director of Policy) with Rania Wannous (NSW Telco Authority)



Following panel participation at an International Institute for Communications, Australia Chapter event on the Scams Prevention Framework

ACCAN has also worked closely with other consumer organisations to advance common areas of advocacy, including supporting the Consumer Policy Research Centre in pushing for the passage of Unfair Trading Practices legislation, which passed earlier this year, and working closely with the Consumer Action Law Centre and CHOICE on combatting scams and the ongoing establishment of the Scams Prevention Framework (SPF). Whilst the primary legislation for the SPF is now in place, much work remains in developing the underlying sector-specific codes, including for the telecommunications sector.

ACCAN also welcomed the introduction of the SMS Sender ID Register, which will help disrupt impersonation scams by limiting registered sender IDs to legitimate brands and warning consumers about unverified messages.

Following the catastrophic Triple Zero outage on the Optus network in late 2025, ACCAN has been advocating for stronger governance, better reliability, improved transparency, and technology-neutral access across the Triple Zero ecosystem.

The policy team continues to engage with ongoing inquiries and reviews of the system, calling for specific changes to the Triple Zero system, as well as for reliability standards to be imposed across the broader telecommunications networks that support Triple Zero, and for the essential nature of telecommunications – including as a critical aspect of public safety - to be recognised in law.

A safer, more reliable **Triple Zero**

Following the Optus outage in late 2025, ACCAN has advocated across the Triple Zero ecosystem for:

Stronger governance

Better reliability

Improved transparency

Technology-neutral access



Carol Bennett and Dr Gareth Downing at the Senate inquiry into Triple Zero service outages

After years of consumer sector advocacy on the issue, the ACMA rejected the Telecommunications Consumer Protection (TCP) Code, and made the move to direct regulation. This was a major win for the consumer movement, following years of proof that the industry-drafted Code was unfit for purpose including Federal Court findings against both Optus and Telstra for unconscionable sales practices. The ACMA is now in the process of drafting a new Standard, and we remain committed to advocating for stronger and more robust levels of protections for consumers throughout this next phase.

Looking ahead, following strong calls from ACCAN for the declaration of mandatory domestic mobile roaming, the ACCC has launched a 12-month inquiry into mobile services, including examining the declaration of domestic roaming or a radio access network service. While ACCAN considers a year long review and delay to reforms to be too long for consumers to wait for the increased coverage, competition, choice and lower prices that roaming would offer, we will work hard to bring the consumer voice into this inquiry and advocate through our policy work for the best solution for all Australian consumers.

Artificial intelligence, whilst it presents both opportunities and risks for the global and domestic economy, is increasingly the focus of policy work and analysis from a consumer perspective. Its application across the board, to consumer protections, infrastructure, digital inclusion, affordability, digital platforms, and online safety, mean it will no doubt become an increasingly pivotal part of ACCAN's policy work.

We look forward to working with Government, academia, the consumer sector and others as the policy and regulatory responses to this rapidly evolving technology are developed.



Deputy CEO Dr Gareth Downing at the launch of *First Nations Digital Inclusion in Western Sydney* Report (funded through ACCAN's Independent Grants Program)



Carol Bennett, Jean Skeat (CALC) and Janine Rayner (Uniting Vic.Tas)



Carol and Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Cynthia Gebert in Canberra

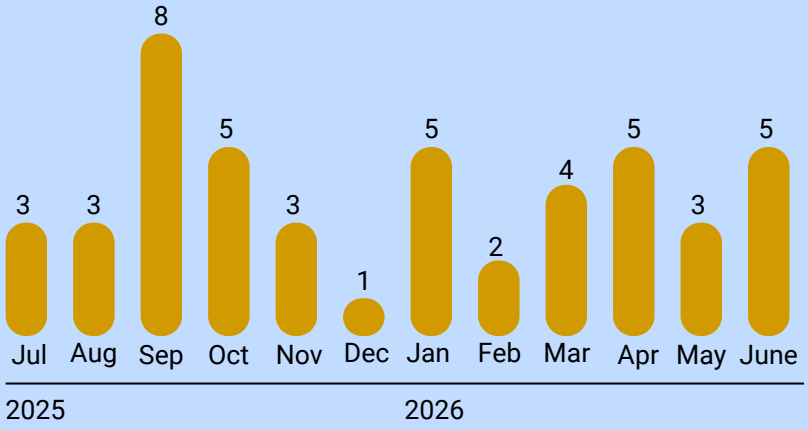
SUBMISSIONS

ACCAN engaged in an extensive range of consultations with industry, government, regulatory and other bodies in 2025–26.

46

published submissions

July 2025 – June 2026



JULY 2025

01 Expiring spectrum licences (stage 3) - preliminary views

02 Economic Reform Roundtable - Treasury

03 Australian Code of Practice for App Store Operators and App Developers - Department of Home Affairs

AUGUST 2025

04 Record Keeping Rules Review 2025 - ACCC

05 Changing the Complaints Handling Record Keeping Rules - ACMA

06 Proposed changes to the SMS sender ID register - ACMA

SEPTEMBER 2025

07 Proposed requirements for the SMS sender ID register - ACMA

08 Proposed Annual Carrier Licence Charge 2024-25 - ACMA

09 ACCAN's Submission to the ACCC on Voice Interconnection Services Access Determination Inquiry

10 Sunsetting of the Telecommunications (Participating Persons) Determination 2015 - DITRDCSA

11 Greenwashing Inquiry - Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications

12 Inquiry into the prevalence and impacts of misinformation and disinformation related to climate change and energy - Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy

13 Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy - Productivity Commission

14 Proposed Withdrawal of C637:2019 Mobile Premium Services (MPS) Industry Code and G639:2020 Mobile Premium Services Mandatory Information Industry Guideline - ATA

This list excludes closed consultations and oral submissions, which are not published on our website. Email-format submissions are included where they are publicly available.

OCTOBER 2025

15 Infrastructure Assets Record Keeping Rules - ACCC

16 ACCAN Submission to the Inquiry into Combatting Crime as a Service - Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcemen

17 Proposal to amend the Prepaid Determination - ACMA

18 Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO) draft legislation - DITRDCSA

19 Audit of telecommunications infrastructure assets record keeping rules - ACCC

NOVEMBER 2025

20 Comprehensive Views on the ACCC's Consultation on NBN Co's RMA proposal - ACCC

21 ACCAN's response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) review – Attorney General's Department

22 Inquiry into Triple Zero service outage - Environment and Communications References Committee

DECEMBER 2025

23 Submission to ACCC Consultation for Benchmark Service Standards for the Second Regulatory Cycle - DITRDCSA

JANUARY 2026

24 Scams Prevention Framework – Draft law package and position paper - Treasury

25 Superfast broadband access service (SBAS) declaration inquiry 2025 - ACCC

26 Financial support for state and territory infrastructure projects - Finance and Public Administration References Committee

27 Prebudget Submission 2026-27 - Treasury

28 Mobile Network Hardening Program Perth Hills Round – Draft Grant Opportunity Guidelines - DITRDCSA

FEBRUARY 2026

29 Proposed public register of telecommunications outages - ACMA

30 Proposal to make the mobile coverage mapping standard - ACMA

MARCH 2026

31 Compliance and enforcement priorities 2026–27 - ACMA

32 Rural, regional and remote Medicare access and funding - Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

33 Extending the Customer Service Guarantee instruments - DITRDCSA

34 Select Committee on Productivity in Australia – Parliament of Australia

APRIL 2026

35 Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation) Bill 2025 - Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

36 Draft Amendment No. 1/2026 to AS/CA S042.1:2025 Requirements for connection to an air interface of a Telecommunications Network – Part 1 - ATA

37 Consultation on wholesale and networks record keeping rule - ACCC

38 First Nations Digital Support Hub and Network of Digital Mentors – draft grant opportunity guidelines - DITRDCSA

MAY 2026

39 Extending rules about requests for USO voice services - DITRDCSA

40 Expiring Spectrum Licences (stage 4) – updated preliminary views on pricing - ACMA

41 Consultation on application-to-person (A2P) SMS record keeping rules - ACCC

JUNE 2026

42 West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round Guidelines - DITRDCSA

43 Extending the Customer Service Guarantee rules - ACMA

44 Consultation on the Draft Replacement Module Determination - ACCC

45 Inquiry into the factors driving educational attainment - Standing Committee on Education

46 Exposure Draft of the Privacy (Children's Online Privacy) Code 2026 - OAIC



KEY

MILESTONES

JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026

JULY 2025

1 New protections for telco customers facing domestic, family and sexual violence take effect

3 ACCAN calls for a re-examination of the ACMA's draft spectrum pricing, publishing an expert paper by Professor Richard Holden

7 Opinion piece in The Canberra Times on spectrum pricing

8 ACCAN publishes its first Consumer Sentiment Tracker research report

17 ACCAN-funded First Nations Digital Inclusion in Western Sydney report launches

23 Carol Bennett joins Senator Fatima Payman to launch the Click to Cancel campaign

AUGUST 2025

28 Telecommunications (Enhancing Consumer Safeguards) Bill reintroduced to Parliament

SEPTEMBER 2025

4 Fair Call Coalition calls on ACMA to reject the draft TCP Code

18 Optus Triple Zero outage disrupts emergency calls across three states, linked to two deaths

OCTOBER 2025

15 ACCAN position paper calling for a national outage register published

24 ACMA rejects draft Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code

NOVEMBER 2025

3 Optus and ACMA face Senate inquiry into Triple Zero failures

7 ACCAN convenes a forum on spectrum management

20 Consumer Sentiment Tracker Wave 2 published

20 ACCAN awarded an EARGie by the Economic Abuse Reference Group for our work in advocating for the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Standard

27 Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation legislation introduced to Parliament

27 IGP researcher Dr Senuri Wijenayake awarded a prestigious Australian Research Council award to continue online-safety research begun under her ACCAN grant

DECEMBER 2025

9 ACCAN executive provide evidence to Senate Environment & Communications References Committee (Triple Zero outage inquiry)

10 Social media minimum age (under-16) laws commence

JANUARY 2026

1 New Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Standard rules take effect

22 ACMA lifts its spectrum valuation to $7.3 billion following sustained scrutiny

FEBRUARY 2026

10 Carol Bennett speech to TelSoc on the 2026 telco reform agenda

12 ACCAN hosts a delegation from the New Zealand Commerce Commission to compare emergency-call resilience approaches

26 Optus Triple Zero outage disrupts emergency calls across three states, linked to multiple deaths

MARCH 2026

12 ACCAN launches Future of Australia's NBN report

20 New Consumer Sentiment Tracker research – revelatory about the consumer Triple Zero experience

APRIL 2026

1 ACMA rejects the TCP Code for a second time, opening the door to direct regulation

MAY 2026

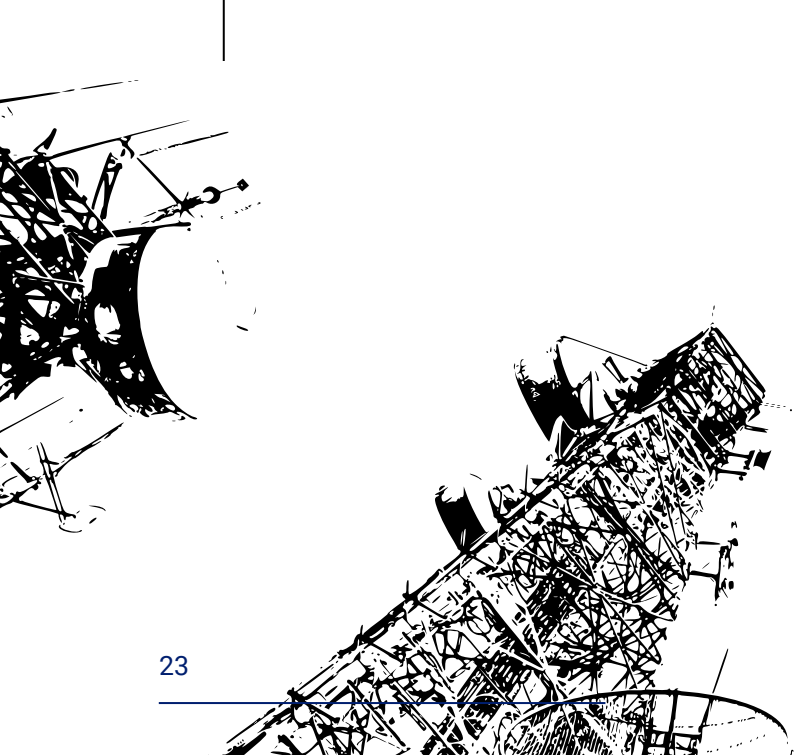
14 Federal Budget handed down; Enhancing Consumer Safeguards Bill passes the House

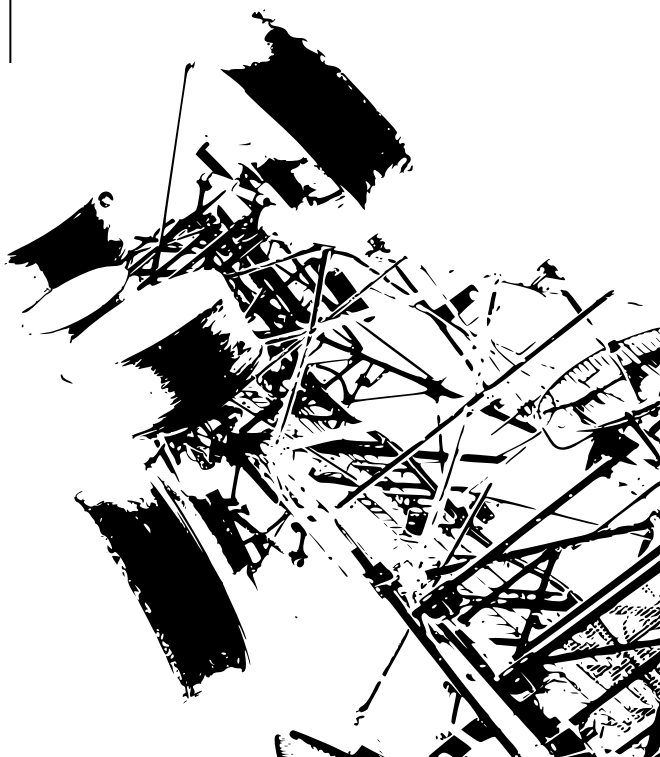
22 ACMA confirms final spectrum valuation at $7.32 billion

JUNE 2026

12 ACCAN executive provide evidence to Parliamentary Joint Committee 'Combatting Crime as a Service' inquiry

30 New mobile coverage map and outage register rules commence





A CONSUMER VOICE FOR THE NBN

ACCAN received an Australian Government grant to represent consumers in the regulation of the National Broadband Network, following the adoption of the 2023 Special Access Undertaking (SAU) Variation by the ACCC.

Under the SAU, NBN Co is required to demonstrate that its Replacement Module Application reflected the long-term interests of end-users through meaningful consultation with access seekers (retail service providers) and consumer advocacy groups.

In recognition of the SAU's requirements for consumer consultation and ACCAN's role as the peak communications consumer advocacy body, the Department provided $2.56 million in funding from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026 to support ACCAN's participation in the regulatory reset process.

CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES:

ACCAN engaged extensively across multiple consultation processes to ensure consumer interests were reflected in the decisions and regulatory settings that will shape NBN Co's expenditure programs, service standards and accountability framework over the next three years.

Throughout FY25-26, ACCAN submitted to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)'s consultations on NBN Co's Replacement Module Application, the Benchmark Service Standards and the ACCC's draft replacement Module Determination. In these submissions, ACCAN made several substantive recommendations to NBN Co and the ACCC:

- Strengthen benchmark service standards, priority assistance arrangements and regional, rural, remote and service service timeframes.
- Improve expenditure governance and demand forecasting.
- Review the methodology for determining the Weighted Average Cost of Captial
- Review the Entry-Level Offer
- Regulate new LEO satellite services.

ACCAN's submissions were complemented by several attachments, including economic analysis produced by FTI Consulting and a consumer engagement report produced by Cred Consulting.

2 years

Representing consumers in the reset, July 2024 to June 2026

3 years

Of NBN Co expenditure, service standards and accountability shaped by these decisions

3

ACCC consultations we submitted to in FY25–26



6	**In-person consultation events** Melbourne · Hobart · Tasman Peninsula · Canberra · Wollongong · Western Sydney
3	**States and territories consulted online** Queensland · Western Australia · Northern Territory
3	**Independent focus groups with end-users** Metropolitan · Regional · Rural and remote
1	**Online poll of high-use consumers** Run on SurveyMonkey with users of the Reddit and Whirlpool internet forums
	National Consumer Survey, Wave 2 A series of questions in ACCAN's nationally representative survey, conducted by Essential

ACCAN conducted a national community engagement program and consulted with our membership base, sector stakeholders, and end-users about their views on NBN Co's proposed expenditure and work programs, as well as their broad experiences and expectations for their internet services.

Our engagement sought to inform our representation of consumers in these consultations, with regard to low-income, First Nations, and regional, rural, and remote (RRR) consumers, as well as consumers experiencing disability.

WHO WE HEARD FROM:

- **Low-income consumers**
- **First Nations consumers**
- **Regional, rural & remote consumers**
- **Consumers experiencing disability**

ACCAN

RESEARCH AND GRANTS

ACCAN's **Commissioned Research** and **Independent Grants Program** (IGP) help us lead national policy and research on communications. The research we fund gives the public timely information on key issues from a consumer perspective

ACCAN administers its annual Independent Grants Program to support independent, world-class research into important communications issues. IGP projects are selected by an independent panel of experts to drive the consumer perspective.

INDEPENDENT GRANTS PROGRAM (IGP)

2026 grants round

In 2026 ACCAN funded three exciting and important research projects through our Independent Grants Program:

Nepalese Association of Victoria

'Breaking Cost Barriers to Essential Digital Access'

total funding

$35,000

Central Queensland University

'Navigating digital exclusion in our digital welfare system: What telcos can do to support customers' access to digital welfare services'

total funding

$12,919

University of Western Australia

'Beyond Australia's $2.8B Telco "Loyalty Tax": How Plan Complexity Harms Vulnerable Consumers and the Case for Building an Independent Telco Comparison Tool'

total funding

$20,000

2026 GRANTS ROUND

18 expressions of interest

7 full applications

3 grants funded

The three successful grants were chosen by our independent grants panel: Professor Molly Dragiewicz, Holly Raiche and Dr Robbie Fordyce. This year ACCAN received 18 expressions of interest with seven projects chosen to submit full applications. The 2026 grants will all aim to complete and deliver their research in 2027.

CURRENT IGP GRANTS DELIVERING FOR CONSUMERS

This year a range of existing IGP grants completed their outputs.



Auslan Translation Guidelines

ACCAN published updated *Auslan Translation Guidelines 2026* and *Fortifying the 2015 Auslan Translation Guidelines Report* from Deaf Australia. With IGP funding, Deaf Australia reviewed the ongoing relevance of the 2015 Guidelines, incorporated the needs of low-vision Deafblind Auslan users, and examined the emergence of Auslan-first video content. The updated guidelines and the evaluative report are available on ACCAN's website to download here.



Safer by Design

Developing design strategies and policies to protect women and gender-diverse people from technology-facilitated abuse on social media delivered a final report titled Safer by *Design: Design and Policy Recommendations for Social Media Safety of Women and Gender-Diverse People in Australia*. The report is available to download here.



Neighbourhood houses and digital skills

Social infrastructure for digital skills development delivered the final report titled *Social infrastructure for digital skills development: The role of neighbourhood houses in supporting digital inclusion*. This report was published in March at Australian Policy Online. The report is available to download here.



First Nations Device Bank

Enabling First Nations digital citizens through a National Device Bank also completed its activities and produced its final report titled *Social Impact Report: First Nations Device Bank*. The report is available to download here.

COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

Each year ACCAN commissions research from trusted research partners to build our policy and advocacy evidence base. This past year ACCAN continued the successful Consumer Sentiment Tracker and completed several recent projects to achieve our strategic priorities and support our policy and advocacy work.



ACCAN CONSUMER SENTIMENT TRACKER

WAVE 1

First wave

Identified real issues for consumers around trust and mis-selling

WAVE 2

August 2025

Topical focus: consumer perceptions of the NBN and priorities for the infrastructure

WAVE 3

February 2026

Topical focus: Reliability

1 in 10

people reported that they or a family member had not been able to contact Triple Zero from a mobile phone due to a mobile outage in the past twelve months

ACCAN completed waves two and three of the Consumer Sentiment Tracker in August 2025 and February 2026 respectively.

The core tracker results across waves two and three confirmed observations made in wave one, that there are real issues for consumers around trust and mis-selling. This supports ACCAN's key focus on these issues over the past year on consumer protections.

Each wave of the Tracker also asks people about topical communications issues. In August 2025, Wave two explored consumer perceptions around the NBN network and their priorities for the infrastructure going forward. In February 2026, the topical questions explored consumer perceptions of Triple Zero calling from a mobile phone.

ACCAN's findings, that one in 10 people, or a member of their family, had had an issue calling Triple Zero due to a mobile outage, created an immediate focus on the issue with immense media, political and regulatory interest in the Tracker. The findings from Wave Three provided a preliminary estimate of the widespread emergency calling issues that had been reported in previous years and subsequently with the July 2026 Telstra outage.

ACCAN's Consumer Sentiment Tracker has continued to be a success providing evidence for ACCAN's policy, media and advocacy efforts and we look forward to continuing the project in the coming waves.

Find every report from the ACCAN Consumer Sentiment Tracker for download here.

EXPERIENCES AND BARRIERS IN CONTACTING TRIPLE ZERO REPORT

Following the enormous interest in the Consumer Sentiment Tracker reports on emergency calling, ACCAN published two further reports on consumer experiences calling Triple Zero from a mobile phone: Consumer experiences contacting Triple Zero: Snapshot Report and Experiences and Barriers in Contacting Triple Zero: Full Report (available for download here and here). The reports were published in the weeks prior to the July 2026 Telstra outage and helped inform ACCAN's advocacy work.



Consumer experiences contacting Triple Zero: Snapshot Report



Experiences and Barriers in Contacting Triple Zero: Full Report

EXPERT NOTES ON SPECTRUM ASSIGNMENT POLICY

JUNE 2025	REPLY	AUGUST 2025	EXPERT NOTE 3
Expert note 1	**Optus / Coleago report**	**Expert note 2**	**Pre-tax WACC**
Professor Holden's first note, submitted to the ACMA's stage 3 consultation	Commissioned by Optus in reply to the first note	Response to the Optus/Coleago report	Argued the ACMA should use a pre-tax WACC, like the ACCC

ACCAN published a second and third expert note from UNSW Professor Richard Holden on spectrum assignment policy. ACCAN submitted our first commissioned expert note on spectrum policy by Professor Holden to the ACMA's Expiring spectrum licences (stage 3) – preliminary views consultation June 2025. The expert note's argument, and ACCAN's position, that the ACMA should auction the expiring spectrum licences, has produced a great deal of constructive discussion and interest in spectrum policy

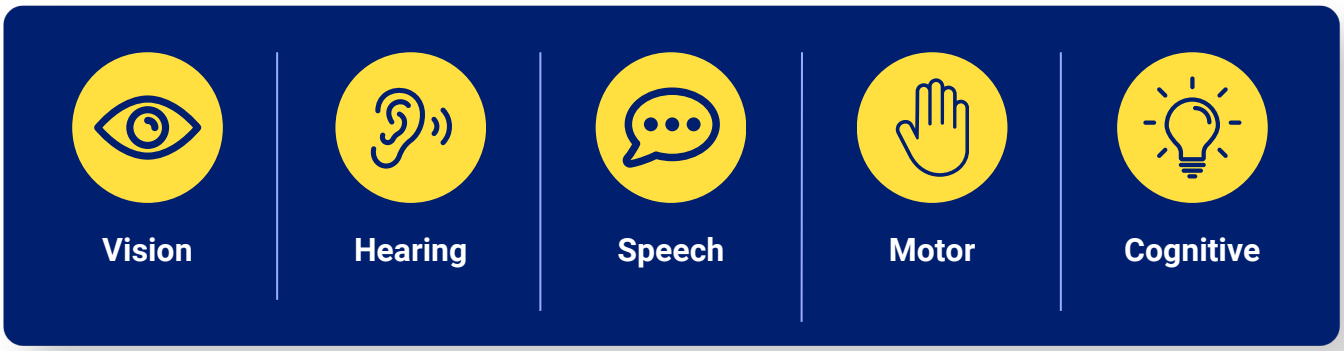
Optus then commissioned Coleago Consulting to reply to Professor Holden's expert note. ACCAN commissioned a second expert note to respond to the Optus/Coleago report in August 2025. Professor Holden's response noted that the Optus/Coleago report made a number of errors and misrepresentations.

ACCAN followed the second expert note with a third expert note which argued that the ACMA should use a pre-tax WACC like the ACCC in their valuation of NBN SAU in the same period. While the ACMA has decided to continue with license renewals, ACCAN's research has facilitated greater media, political and public interest.

ACCAN

ACCESSIBLE TELECOMS

Accessible Telecoms (AT) is a free national service that helps consumers with disability find telecommunications products and providers that suit their needs, anchored by its product accessibility database covering vision, hearing, speech, motor and cognitive access needs.



NEW GRANT

Re-established

Minister signs off a new two-year grant

SINCE MARCH

Rebuilding

Team recruited, website reviewed, accessibility baseline set

YEAR AHEAD

Full operations

Refresh, WCAG 2.2 AA audit, analytics, consumer engagement

100K+

People who used the Accessible Telecoms 2025-2026

Delays in finalising funding arrangements meant that elements of the AT service were paused for much of the year. Consumer support remained available throughout, but the service operated at reduced capacity, with website and search engine updates limited to maintenance during the pause.

Following the Minister's sign-off on a new two-year grant, AT has been re-established. Since March, work has focused on rebuilding foundations: recruiting the team, reviewing the website, and establishing an accessibility and user experience baseline.

Key positions are now filled with a new Project Manager and Consumer Education Officer having joined the project, bringing together expertise in user experience and project management, ICT development, and helpline and content delivery.

AT is now returning to full operations. A review and refresh of the website and the service is underway — covering content, structure, technical health and accessibility — to ensure both align with contemporary consumer needs. AT is committed to modelling the accessibility standards it advocates for, and is working towards full WCAG 2.2 AA conformance, supported by an external audit, with remediation of priority issues already underway.

AT has commenced a consumer engagement project to obtain feedback on consumer priorities for accessible devices. What consumers with disability tell us will shape the refreshed service and inform ACCAN's wider accessibility advocacy.

Priorities for the year ahead are to complete the website review and refresh, commission the external WCAG 2.2 AA audit, restore analytics and reporting, and deliver the consumer engagement project. With funding secured and the team in place, AT is well positioned to return to full service and deliver support for consumers with disability.

ACCAN

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS 79

A

Able Australia
Adult Learning Australia
AgForce Queensland Farmers Ltd
auDA .au Domain Administration
Australian Council of Social Service
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
Australian Independent Retirees
Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association

B

Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
Blind Citizens Australia

C

CARE Inc
Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre Inc
Central Land Council
Centre For Accessibility Australia
Centre for Appropriate Technology
CHOICE
Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc
Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
Consumer Action Law Centre
Consumer Credit Legal Service WA
Consumer Policy Research Centre
COTA Australia
Cotton Australia
Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia
Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc.

D

Deaf Australia
Deaf Connect
Deafness Council of NSW Inc
Deafness Forum Australia
Desert Knowledge Australia
Differently Abled People Association Inc.
Digital Literacy Foundation
Digital Tasmania

E

Electronic Frontiers Australia Inc
Expression Australia

F

Financial Counselling Association of WA (FCAWA)
Financial Counselling Queensland Inc
Financial Counselling Victoria Inc.
Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland Inc.
Financial Rights Legal Centre

G

Good Things Foundation Australia
Grain Growers Ltd

H

Hear With Us

I

Illawarra Legal Centre Inc
Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd
Infoxchange
Internet Australia
Internet Australia and auIGF
Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia
Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW
Isolated Children's Parents' Association of SA
Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA

J

Justice & Equity Centre

M

MoneyMob Talkabout

N

National Council of Women of Australia
National Farmers Federation
National Rural Health Alliance
National Rural Women's Coalition

O

OZeWAI

P

Pastoralists' Association of West Darling Inc
People with Disabilities WA
People with Disability Australia
Physical Disability Australia
Physical Disability Council of NSW

R

Redfern Legal Centre
Regional Development Australia Northern Territory Inc (RDANT)

S

Simbani Research Pty Ltd

T

Tenants Queensland
The Concordia Initiative
The Macdonald Valley Association
The Reconnect Project
The South Australian Financial Counsellors Association Inc
Think+ DO Tank Foundation

V

Vision Australia

W

Wamboin Communications Action Group
Westjustice
Wireless Internet Service Providers Association of Australia (WISPAU)
Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Y

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

ACCAN

LIFE MEMBERS

Len Bytheway

Andrew Stewart

Gunela Astbrink

Ian Binnie

Nan Bosler AM

Gerard Goggin

Johanna Plante

Sue Salthouse AM (deceased)

Nigel Waters

Robin Wilkinson

Holly Raiche

ACCAN

BOARD



CHAIRPERSON

Vince Humphries

Joined: 2022 AGM (re-appointed 2025 AGM for a 3-year term)

Term ends: 2028 AGM



DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Bobbie Blackson

Joined: 2023 AGM

Term ends: 2026 AGM



Amber Marshall

Joined: 2025 AGM

Term ends: 2028 AGM



Daniel Featherstone

Joined: 2024 AGM

Term ends: 2027 AGM



David Spriggs

Co-opted: April 2025 (Elected 2025 AGM)

Term ends: 2028 AGM



Robert Morsillo

Joined: 2024 AGM

Term ends: 2027 AGM



Ron Ben-David

Joined: 2025 AGM

Term ends: 2028 AGM



Tess Matthews

Joined: 2025 AGM

Term ends: 2028 AGM



Joanna Ifield

Board-appointed

Joined: 29 July 2026

Term ends: 29 July 2029



David Hofierka

Board-appointed

Joined: 29 July 2026

Term ends: 29 July 2029

2025-26

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

Contact ACCAN:

Address: PO Box A1158 Sydney South, NSW 1235
Email: info@accan.org.au
Phone: (02) 9288 4000

You can contact ACCAN through the **National Relay Service:**
www.relayservice.gov.au