



accan
MAGAZINE

THIS EDITION:
**BUSH
TELE-
GRAPH**

REGIONAL RURAL AND
REMOTE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CONSUMER TIPS: MOBILE COVERAGE

POLICY: NEW PAYPHONE RULES

NBN CO MIKE QUIGLEY PLUS MUCH MORE

SUMMER
2012

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ACCAN
MAGAZINE
ISSUE:03

OUR CEO: TERESA CORBIN



The Summer edition of ACCAN Magazine is dedicated to regional, rural and remote telecommunications and includes a wide range of perspectives on the issues affecting people living and working outside the major cities; some one-third of our population.

ACCAN has made a comprehensive submission to the 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review, which is currently underway (see our cover story on page 6).

The first half of this year will see outcomes delivered from a number of significant reviews and inquiries. The first is the ACMA's Reconnecting the Customer (RTC) inquiry into telecommunications customer service and complaint-handling issues. This is closely tied to the completion of the revised Telecommunications Consumer Protection (TCP) Code by industry body Communications Alliance. The ACMA has said, clearly and repeatedly, that if the TCP Code doesn't address its five RTC recommendations, then it will take action to buttress the Code with regulations.

We're looking forward to another important review being finalised, the Review of access to telecommunication services by people with disability, older Australians and people experiencing illness. ACCAN also made an extensive submission to this review, endorsed by more than 20 organisations. We hope to see a number of our recommendations included in the final report.

The important work that our policy team undertakes often flies under the radar compared to our more public consumer awareness activities and campaigning, but it's a big part of what we do. In the 2010-11 financial year we made some 30 submissions. You can find them via accan.org.au/submissions. We remain committed to engaging with industry, government and regulatory authorities to work towards a telecommunications regulatory framework that offers appropriate consumer protections and ensures equitable access to services.

The year is shaping up to be another exciting one and, as we move into our third year of operation as Australia's peak consumer telecommunications body, we thank you for your ongoing support.

Teresa Corbin

Chief Executive Officer – ACCAN

ACCAN OUR STORY

ACCAN is the peak organisation representing all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. Our mission is to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians.

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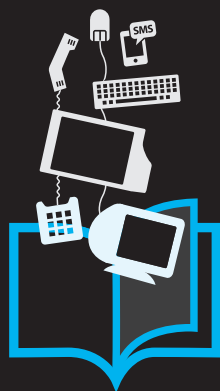
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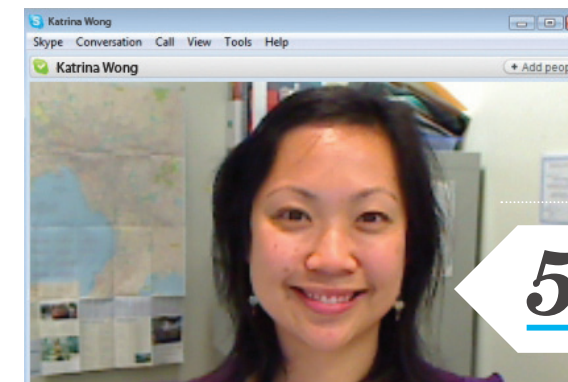
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LATEST NEWS

Salespeople: Don't come a-knocking



Door-to-door salespeople travel through towns in rural and remote Australia and often use high-pressure tactics to get people to buy products they don't want, don't need, and can't afford.

The Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) has launched a national Do Not Knock campaign. CALC has already distributed thousands of 'Do Not Knock' stickers as part of the campaign which aims to send a clear message to salespeople – 'you are not welcome here.'

We also understand that some unscrupulous salespeople will target new Australians or people with limited English, signing them up for contracts without fully explaining the details, costs and cooling-off rights.

Telecommunications providers sometimes employ third-party companies to go door-to-door to get new customers to sign up on the spot – which is never a good idea, as you need plenty of time to ensure you are getting the right plan for your individual needs.

A Do Not Knock sticker is included with this magazine. If you would like more copies of the CALC sticker, contact erin.turner@accan.org.au or visit www.donotknock.org.au to print your own. More information on the Do Not Knock campaign, including information on your legal rights when dealing with salespeople, is available at www.donotknock.org.au



TIO financial hardship roundtable off to a promising start

ACCAN members have consistently raised concerns about how financial hardship is addressed by telco service providers. The TIO's 2011 Annual report also shows an increase in credit management issues. ACCAN therefore warmly welcomed the convening of a financial hardship roundtable in November 2011 by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) to discuss this issue with large and small telcos, financial counsellors, peak bodies and relevant government agencies.

The discussion demonstrated goodwill on the part of all participants. ACCAN looks forward to continuing the dialogue, with the next roundtable expected to be in the first half of 2012.

THUMBS UP OR DOWN



BIG UP

- ☺ ACMA announces that it intends to make 1800 calls free from mobiles and 13/1300 calls the same price as calls from a fixed line.

WAY DOWN

- ☹ Telstra leaks customers' usernames and passwords by exposing its database of bundle account holders.



SMS emergency & phone app due in 2012

Most Australians know that in an emergency you call 000. These calls are increasingly being made from mobile phones. However, for people who are Deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired, making emergency calls from mobile phones is either difficult or impossible.

In April 2010, Senator Conroy announced his intention to establish an SMS emergency service for people with disabilities. At the same time, the Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) started work on a smartphone app that will allow National Relay Service (NRS) users make emergency calls. It is expected a text-based service will be trialled in the first half of 2012.

ACCAN, along with Deaf Australia, Deafness Forum, Communication Rights Australia, the Australian Deafblind Council and the Independent Living Centre of NSW, is arguing that both the app and SMS emergency service are essential and calling for a trial of both technologies to start as soon as possible. To find out more about the campaign for emergency call access visit accan.org.au/emergencyaccess

ACCC takes Excite Mobile to court

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has alleged false, misleading and unconscionable conduct against Excite Mobile.

The telco has been accused of using a supposed independent debt collector named "Jerry Hastings" to send almost 1,100 letters to its customers which contained misleading representations about the telco's rights in regards to legal action against customers. There are also accusations of the mobile provider setting up bogus independent complaints tribunals and warning customers of a 20% fee if bills were not paid on time.

The ACCC is seeking injunctions, pecuniary penalties, orders that two directors be disqualified from managing a corporation for five years and costs. A directions hearing is scheduled for mid-January.

These allegations come as the ACCC plans to increase its presence in remote Australia, with a focus on information and education for Indigenous people about their rights and ensuring earlier detection of potentially unlawful behaviour.

Crunching the Numbers:

6,886,600

Number of Australians who live outside major cities.

106,000

Number of satellite internet subscribers in Australia as of June 2011.

70

Percentage of surveyed NSW farmers who say they do not have adequate mobile coverage on their farm.

12

Percentage of payphones in rural areas removed in 2009-10.

6.85

Percentage of payphones in urban areas removed in the same period.

MIKE QUIGLEY

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NBN CO



7% per cent of Australian premises will receive a fixed wireless or satellite broadband connection. Can you explain the technology for fixed wireless and satellite?

Fixed wireless and satellite technologies are being designed to allow telephone and internet service providers to offer high quality broadband services to people in rural communities and remote areas where it would be impractical and too costly to roll out fibre.

The fixed wireless service is being built using the latest fourth-generation cellular technology that is starting to be used for mobile phones. However, the NBN's fixed wireless service is not a mobile broadband service, it will use cellular technology to transmit signals to an antenna fixed on a home or business premise. Unlike mobile broadband services where people move in and out of an area or get further from the centre of the cell, the advantage of fixed wireless transmissions is that the network can be developed for a known number of users at a set distance from the base station.

What sort of speeds will I get with a fixed wireless service and how does that differ to wireless in rural areas now?

NBN Co plans to offer telephone and internet service providers wholesale broadband services designed for speeds of up to 12/1 megabits per second (Mbps).

It is difficult to compare fixed wireless speeds with what is available now. Existing wireless speeds may vary for each individual depending on where they are in relation to the base station, how many people are in the cell and how much data they are using at a given time. However, NBN Co is designing its network to a target standard regardless of where you are in the cell, and taking into account the number of premises.

What sort of speeds will I get with a satellite service and how does that differ to what has been available over satellite until now?

Since July 2011 NBN Co has been offering an Interim Satellite Service to eligible people who don't have access to other "metro comparable" services. The Interim Satellite Service is designed to offer telephone and internet service providers wholesale speeds up to 6 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 1 Mbps upload. Speeds actually achieved by end users will depend on a number of factors including the quality of

their equipment and in-premises connection and the broadband plans offered by their service provider.

Will I pay more for a fixed wireless or satellite broadband service than people with fibre connections?

NBN Co doesn't set retail prices, however our wholesale price is set at a uniform national wholesale access price of \$24 per month for the entry level service. This is the same basic service speed and wholesale price available across fixed wireless, satellite and fibre.

Will I have a range of service providers to choose from?

There are already seven service providers offering services over the NBN Interim Satellite Service. Further information is available at <http://www.nbnco.com.au/getting-connected/certified-service-providers.html>

The NBN is being designed to carry data from a premise to a point where it can be handed over to the network of a telephone or internet service provider. There should be 121 of these points in the network by the time the Long-Term Satellite is launched. When the network is operating in a business-as-usual mode, it should be possible for any service provider to offer a service from a point of interconnect regardless of the access technology of the consumer – fibre, fixed wireless or satellite.

Do we know what areas are getting fixed wireless and satellite services at what date?

NBN Co has started constructing the fixed wireless network and the first five sites are due to launch in the middle of next year. The entire fixed wireless network is scheduled for completion in 2015. There is an indicative list of areas to be covered by wireless on the website www.nbnco.com.au/our-networks/maps

The Long-Term Satellite service is scheduled for launch in 2015, but eligible consumers and small businesses can already access NBN Co's Interim Satellite service – see www.nbnco.com.au/satellite for more information.

YOUTHLAW KATRINA WONG, LEGAL OUTREACH LAWYER



Tell us about your organisation and the work it does.

Youthlaw is a Victorian community legal centre that specialises in providing free legal advice, information and casework to young people under the age of 25. We have a drop-in legal clinic and also provide a Skype online legal outreach service to five different regional locations in Victoria:

Cobram, Shepparton, Seymour, Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra Valley Region.

How much demand is there for Skype online legal outreach service in regional areas?

There is a lack of age-appropriate, accessible legal services in regional, remote and rural areas, and this is exacerbated for young people who often find it difficult to approach a lawyer with a legal problem. Unfortunately, the funding that we have received for the Skype online service will end in June 2012. We are currently investigating potential opportunities to support and extend our service.

What sorts of issues are most common among the young people you come into contact with?

Young people present with a whole range of issues – we get everything including debt matters (telephone bills, small loans), discrimination matters, tenancy matters, advice about rights when interacting with police, and criminal matters. There is also a high demand for family law advice and representation.

Do you ever have problems Skyping young people due to a lack of access to decent internet in regional or rural areas?

Part of our Skype legal service model was to partner up with a local youth organisation which would already have access to resources

such as computers and internet. There are the usual difficulties in using technology as a mode of legal service delivery – often the video conferencing option will affect the audio quality, and sometimes calls will drop out. However, all in all it appears to be working well.

Do you find there's much, if any, difference between young people living in regional areas compared to metropolitan areas?

The legal issues are quite similar, but there appears to be a greater demand for family law advice (in relation to parenting, child support, intervention orders, etc). The other main difference is that there are limited other support services (such as mental health services, housing support, family services support) in regional areas. This makes it particularly difficult for young people living in these areas, given the limited public transport available, to access these support services, which means they often do not get the assistance that they require.

For more information about Youthlaw's current campaigns, go to www.youthlaw.asn.au



2011-12 REGIONAL TELE- COMMUN- ICATIONS REVIEW

In December 2011, ACCAN made a submission to the 2011–12 Regional Telecommunications Review following an initial survey and extensive consultations with our member organisations and wider stakeholders. The purpose of the Review is to investigate what needs to be done to bring equitable access to telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Following is a range of perspectives from Australians living and working in regional rural and remote parts of the country with an introduction from Robin Eckermann, who is a member of the Regional Independent Telecommunications Review Committee.

ROBIN ECKERMANN

Location: Canberra

Job: Member of the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC).



As a member of RTIRC, can you tell us about the Review and why it is being undertaken?

The 2011–12 Regional Telecommunications Review seeks to build upon the progress achieved since the 2008 review. The committee's approach to the 2011–12 RTR is to take a snapshot of current service availability in different areas; and to look to the future to identify what further steps are needed for regional Australia to progressively take advantage of improved broadband services.

What sort of issues is the Committee looking at?

The committee has been tasked to report on telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. The committee has been asked to have particular regard to the opportunities that the NBN creates for the growing digital economy to improve the delivery of:

- Health and education outcomes
- Business efficiencies and opportunities
- Growth in local economies
- Government services and programs, including local government services

The committee is also interested in other issues that are important to regional, rural and remote communities. These include:

- The communications needs of Indigenous Australians, particularly those that live in rural and remote communities
- Developments in the terrestrial and satellite mobile phone sector
- The consumer concerns of people and businesses in regional, rural and remote Australia.

The RTIRC has received submissions and hosted public consultations around Australia, what are the common themes that are emerging?

Common themes that are emerging through the public submissions process and the committee's public consultations include:

- The capacity of high-speed broadband to improve education and health in rural and remote communities
- The importance of early engagement in the digital economy for businesses and local economic development
- Strong interest in mobile coverage in rural and remote areas
- How high speed broadband can benefit businesses and consumers in regional and remote areas, and contribute to local economic development
- The importance of digital literacy and the need for strategies to ensure people can participate in the digital economy.

Have there been any surprises?

Regional Australians are very interested in the rollout of the NBN, when they will be able to receive the NBN service and what that means for individual communities. Additionally, the committee is interested to note the number of individuals and groups in regional Australia more fully embracing the opportunities that the digital economy creates. There is also considerable interest in mobile coverage in rural and remote areas and ways to maximise it.

The RTIRC will provide a final report to the DBCDE in March – what happens next?

The Committee will submit its report to the Australian Government by 5 March 2012. The government then has six months to respond.

LYNDA EDWARDS

Location: Narromine, NSW

Job: Program manager, CentaCare Wilcannia Forbes Diocese



CentaCare Wilcannia – Forbes is the official welfare service of the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Wilcannia – Forbes, which covers the western 52 per cent of New South Wales.

What do you love about where you live? Being in the bush; living in wide open spaces and living in a community in which you all know each other. When you're in the bush you often know everyone in town and this creates a solid, trusting community.

What are telecommunications like where you live?

Telecommunications are reasonable where I live in Narromine. The difficulties largely lie in where I work. When I'm out in the smaller towns there is very limited mobile coverage. Some communities have no coverage on their chosen carrier, others, for example in Broken Hill, need to find hot spots to make a call.

What telco services in your areas are people most in need of?

In remote communities where there is no coverage it would be fantastic to have internet and mobile access. Some communities can't afford a computer or have access to a computer so this is another issue. Facebook via the phone is massive – this is an important way of people keeping in contact with family members.

REBECCA HEATH

Location: Curlewis, NSW

Job: Partner in family mixed cropping and cattle business & arts administrator

What do you love about where you live? We've got a good lifestyle in the farming business allows us the benefit of living in a great spot with all its natural beauty and a great local community.

What are telecommunications like where you live?

We've got a pretty good service at home. We were early adopters in the government scheme to get satellite broadband, which we've had for a while and the connection is quite good. You do come down to Sydney [and use the internet] and think home 'oh, home is a bit slow', but we have very few drop outs, etc. Our mobile phones are quite good as well. In the farming business we use the mobiles in partnership with the radio on a daily basis. Our house is in a strange shadow in that we have very poor mobile reception in our house – we have to put it on a windowsill to get reception but overall coverage on the farm is good.

What telco services in your areas are people most in need of?

I think the main thing is mobile coverage – as I said ours is quite good but lots of people don't have as good a service and it's important to ensure that services are equal everywhere. In our farming business we're starting to use an app on the iPad, where my brother-in-law stores information in the cloud about what we're doing in the paddocks, which is then accessed by our agronomist who makes recommendations about what we should be doing to our crop at certain times of the year. Normally that information would have been relayed through a phone call but now we can access that (via the iPad) in real time – but that all relies on us getting mobile coverage in the paddock at that time. Farmers do like to take up new technology but you do need to have reasonable 3G coverage to take full advantage of it.

TIM CRUTCHETT

Location: Wagga Wagga, NSW

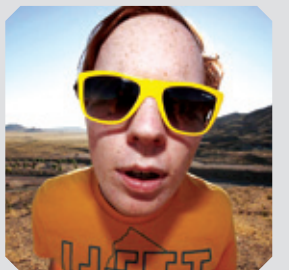
Job: Photographer & digital artist, part-time university lecturer www.tcrutchett.com

What do you love about where you live?

There's a lot I love about Wagga. A lot of people would think that being in a regional community limits you but it doesn't. I like the space we have here, the freedom we have to do what we want but still get ahead career wise.

What are telecommunications like where you live? I've got a fairly fast internet connection that rates amongst the best connections in Australia. I get reception everywhere but I know people who have to use Telstra if they work outside the city in order to get reception.

What telco services in your area are you most in need of? The NBN would be great. It would be really helpful at University for distance education. We use video conferencing a lot at Charles Sturt University because the campus is split between Wagga Wagga and Bathurst.



ADELAIDE GIBBS & NATHANIEL MILLERICK

Location: Townsville, Qld

Job: Adelaide and Nathaniel both work for the armed forces



What do you love about where you live?

A: The people, 'cause everyone knows everyone.

N: Well, this is where I met Adelaide. Townsville is great because you get the benefits of the city with the shops and services but in an hour each direction you can go four-wheel driving, camping or hunting.

What are telecommunications like where you live?

A: My mobile provider is hopeless; I rang up the other day to cancel my service because of the poor reception.

N: The internet is good now we have broadband over the landline but we couldn't get that service at home until last year. We had to use wireless broadband before that and the quality was terrible.

What telco services in your area are you most in need of?

A: Mobile coverage. I get call drop outs too frequently – sometimes the phone doesn't call even when it says it has reception.

N: They should put in 3G service everywhere.

MARGARET MCCARTHY

Location: Gundagai, NSW

Job: Retiree



What do you love about where you live?

I love the pretty town and the people. It's just a lovely, friendly place. Everyone cares for one another. It's a great community.

What are telecommunications like where you live? As far as I know it's good. We've gone digital with the television now, it switched over in November and that's great. We get more channels and the quality is really good, even on smaller screens.

What telco services in your area are you most in need of? We've had a few issues with our phone. We were incorrectly charged for having three phones when we only had one but it was all sorted out. For what we need the internet is fast enough. We're happy with our dial-up service and it's quite affordable for us as pensioners. My husband uses it to look up information for the horse races and I might look up a knitting pattern or a recipe. Gundagai is getting ready for the NBN – I saw something in the local paper. I'm sure that will make a difference.

RESPONSE TO ACCAN'S SURVEY (Oct-Nov 2011)

"We live in a region with no mobile coverage. Tourists come to stay on our station... Since Spring 2011, there have been three incidents where tourists have injured themselves and it has taken 1.5 to 2 hours for someone from their party to walk back to alert us to contact the emergency services because there is no mobile coverage." **Rawnsley Park Station, South Australia**

"We use satellite but find the service intermittent, unreliable and expensive, particularly when using Skype." **Farmer**

"Phone calls [are] dropping out in majority of areas in Tasmania and north west and west coast especially." **Denise Lloyd**

"Video conferencing should be made available in remote settlements, or at least several central locations, where Health Service can have access to face-2-face medical advice. Many Indigenous people travel many kilometres to attend appointments in an urban location with a specialist."

Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation

"We're aware of some service providers' cold calling Indigenous clients in Newman and offering them so called 'free' phones that aren't free... Our clients want a 'free' phone, but they are not able to keep up payments or they lose the phone. In some cases the phone has never been activated and used but they still incur huge bills." **Pilbara Community Legal Service**

"Local service support is lacking in many areas." **Small business**

"Our organisation is 30kms from Kempsey on the Eastern seaboard and yet we receive no signal for mobile phones."

Physical Disability Australia

WHAT ACCAN WANTS

Summary of recommendations we made in our submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review:

- Suggesting strategies to expand mobile coverage in regional areas;
- Benchmarking the impact of the changing telecommunications landscape particularly upon disadvantage and vulnerable groups within regional Australia;
- Telecommunications service providers implementing cultural awareness training for their staff;
- Benchmarking telco financial hardship policies against the financial hardship policies of other industries;
- Introducing low-income measures for broadband;
- Urgent review of the Draft Payphone Instruments proposed by DBCDE by the regional review committee;
- Improving awareness of consumer rights and access to culturally appropriate training in digital literacy;
- Ensuring availability of technical assistance to encourage use of the National Broadband Network and to promote social inclusion;
- Collecting quality of service data annually about the speed, reliability and affordability of consumers' internet services.

You can download the full 35-page submission via accan.org.au/submissions or contact us for a hard copy.

POOR MOBILE RECEPTION? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Poor mobile reception – what can you do?

Poor mobile reception is a problem for many people living in regional and rural parts of Australia, and in remote areas, it is very difficult to get mobile coverage at all. The lack of decent mobile coverage is a frustrating reality for people living outside capital cities, but following are some actions you can take to make sure you don't get stuck with a provider who doesn't have good coverage where you work and/or live.

Ask about coverage before you sign up

Be sure to ask providers about coverage in the locations you will most need such as your home or your workplace. Providers have an obligation to make this information available to you. The provider should be able to show you coverage maps, but be warned, they are not always reliable.

It's a very good idea to ask your neighbours and/or colleagues which mobile provider which provider they are with, and what their coverage is like in your area.

Too late?

If you've already signed up with a mobile provider and regularly experience call drop outs and poor mobile reception in the places that you usually live and work, it means you are not getting the full benefit of the service you have paid for. If you're on a two-year contract, that's a long time to be without a mobile that works where you need it.

Here are five simple steps to hopefully get your issue resolved quickly.

1. GATHER ALL THE RELEVANT INFORMATION

It is useful to gather any evidence that supports your complaint. Note when and where the call dropouts happen. Use your bill to calculate the cost of additional calls you are forced to make, by having to call back the person you are contacting, etc.

2. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT YOUR PROVIDER TO DO

You will probably want your provider to fix the problem. If that's not possible, you may want to be released from your contract without penalty.

3. CONTACT YOUR PROVIDER

Make sure to clearly state that you have a complaint and give the provider as many details as possible. Save any emails and keep a log of the time and date when you make or receive calls.

4. STILL NOT HAPPY?

Suppliers should attempt to resolve your complaint the first time you contact them and finalise it within 30 days. If you are unhappy about the response, or they don't do what they promise, tell your provider you are dissatisfied and ask them if there is any more they can do.

5. CONTACT THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

If your complaint still isn't resolved to your satisfaction, contact the TIO. They have the power to investigate complaints and make the provider release you from the contract, reimburse you or compensate you.

The TIO will need to establish a few facts including what expectations the dealer or provider gave you about coverage, and the extent to which you have been able to use the phone, and when the complainant first brought the complaint to the attention of the provider or dealer.

Lodge your complaint with the TIO by doing one of the following:

- Complete the online form at www.tio.com.au
- Call 1800 062 058 / TTY 1800 675 692
- Post your complaint to PO Box 276, Collins Street West, Vic 8007
- Fax the TIO's consumer complaint form to 1800 630 614



PAYPHONES REGULATION FALLS SHORT

From 1 July 2012, Telstra will receive \$40 million per annum from a new government agency called the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) for the supply, installation and maintenance of public phones. This is up from \$13.8 million in the previous financial year under the previous Universal Service Obligation arrangements.

Currently, Telstra tries to do repairs in one, two or three working days depending on whether the phone is in a metro, rural or remote area. But the new regulations enacted by the Government allow Telstra to meet these timeframes 90 percent of the time in metro and rural areas, and just 80 percent of the time in remote areas.

Telstra has a maximum of 20 working days to complete repairs in a remote area without incurring a penalty. This means that consumers in remote areas could be waiting up to a month for a public phone repair without any penalty payable by Telstra. We don't think this is good enough. Many people living in country Australia rely on public phones as mobile coverage is often poor.

We don't think it is right to lower the standards and benchmarks affecting rural and remote communities, especially since Telstra has removed hundreds of public phones in recent years.

ACCAN, in its submission to the Government argued unsuccessfully that the maximum repair time for public phones should be 10 working days across the country and that the standard repair time of three days for remote communities should be met 90% of the time. The Government didn't budge.

The new process for determining if public phones should be removed is measured according to its 'net social benefit'. However in reality it doesn't assess the social benefit. Rather, it sets community needs off against Telstra's commercial interests in a way that makes it very hard for communities to win once Telstra has made up its mind to remove a public phone.

ACCAN intends to keep working on this issue and make sure real stories, which demonstrate how important public phones are for people around Australia, get brought to the Government's attention.

If you have a story about public phones in your area, ACCAN wants to hear about it. Email us via erin.turner@accan.org.au

NEW PAYPHONE REPAIR RULES

	Standard repair time	Percentage of repairs that completed within standard repair time	Maximum fault repair time without penalty
Metro	1 day	90%	10 working days
Regional	2 days	90%	15 working days
Remote	3 days	80%	20 working days

WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES NSW, THINK B4 U CLICK

The Project

The Think B4 U Click project seeks to engage young Aboriginal women in secondary schools in regional New South Wales about cyberbullying issues. Although there is a wealth of cyberbullying materials available around the world, teachers working in these schools found existing resources are often wordy, designed for students in the UK and US, and difficult for Indigenous students to identify with. In response, the Indigenous Women's Legal Program will be running five workshops for young Indigenous women to get to the heart of the issues.

The students who have taken part in the workshops held so far have said they are interested in practical advice about how to manage their Facebook privacy settings on their mobile phones, as well as broader discussions around what constitutes cyberbullying and the effect that online actions can have.

The Workshops

Donna Henson of the Indigenous Women's Legal Program says the project is off to a promising start.

"The project works well as it has been developed and delivered in a culturally appropriate way that facilitates respectful open engagement with young women."

This means creating a safe environment for both bullies and victims to share their experiences without judgment. It also means giving girls plenty of time to discuss issues, ask questions and to think about things.

The young women who participate receive advice on the potential legal issues around cyberbullying and are encouraged to keep in touch with Women's Legal Services NSW through Facebook and Twitter.

Follow WLS on Twitter via [@womenslegalsnw](https://twitter.com/womenslegalsnw) or Facebook www.facebook.com/wlsnsw

About ACCAN Grants:

ACCAN awards \$250,000 annually to projects that align with our vision for available, accessible and affordable telecommunications for all Australians. The 2012 Round of the ACCAN Grants Scheme open on 20 February and applications close 2 April. Visit www.accan.org.au/grants for more info.

Image by Swel (courtesy of Women's Legal Services NSW)



HEALTH CONSUMERS OF RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA



MARG YORKSTON
CHAIRPERSON

Tell us about your organisation.

Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia is an incorporated organisation working to improve health outcomes for people living in the bush. At its heart, HCRRA is a group of people from across Australia with different backgrounds and experience who have come together because they believe that Australians living in the rural and remote areas have the right to receive a reasonable level of health care. Our membership includes CEOs, researchers, doctors, allied health professionals, representative groups, politicians, and individuals who are concerned at the level of health services provided in their local area.

How much of a difference does where you live make to the quality and availability of health services?

The lack of medical services available in rural and remote areas of Australia is well documented. Despite the efforts of Government to attract and retain medical staff, the bush is severely under serviced. Those of us who live in more isolated areas are aware of the deficiencies and, although we may not like it and are doing everything within our power to improve things, unfortunately it is a fact of life at present.

What are the main telecommunications challenges faced by people living in rural areas?

Mobile coverage is very patchy in many areas. This is a concern not only for women and children traveling long distances, i.e. safety and breakdown issues, but generally we have that feeling of lack of easy contact with the outside world. For example, when our power goes out (which is quite often) we do not have any phone coverage and have to drive up the road to gain reasonable mobile coverage to call the electricity company.

Do you see any opportunities in the future for the improvement of health services delivered via high-speed broadband?

Obviously we are hopeful of improvements in health service delivery in the near future when patients and health professionals have access to both Telehealth and eHealth. Telehealth will certainly assist with rural and remote patient diagnosis and care and eHealth will enable patients to have access to their electronic health records. In rural and remote areas when patients are transferred from their local medical facility, their health records will be accessible where ever they are sent, and on discharge a full patient record will be available. This has to have positive outcomes for improved patient healthcare.

AND MEET A NEW MEMBER



The Council on the Ageing WA (COTA WA) is Western Australia's peak non-profit seniors' organisation. With a vision to protect and advance the rights of all older Western Australians our purpose is to work with all older Australians to achieve a just, inclusive and equitable society.

Our services and programs consist of volunteering opportunities, retirement planning, consulting services, peer education programs such as Medicines and You, Beyond Maturity Blues and Active Ageing programs such as Technology Training (computers and mobile phones) and Anti-Ageing Training.

