



# Dollars and Bytes

Communications affordability now and tomorrow

ACCAN National Conference: 1st & 2nd September 2015  
[accan.org.au/affordability](http://accan.org.au/affordability)



Australia's peak body for communications consumers



THIS EDITION:  
**Communications affordability**  
- now and tomorrow

Tips for picking a good value  
NBN internet plan

All you need to know about  
mobile data

**PLUS:** Where is the service quality? | Enabling a digitally inclusive society

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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## Our CEO: Teresa Corbin

**A**ffordability of communications products is one of ACCAN's three key objectives, along with availability and accessibility. This year the ACCAN National Conference, *Dollars and Bytes – Communications affordability now and tomorrow*, will address issues relating to the affordability of essential telecommunications services, including mobile phones and broadband.

In this edition, our Feature explores good value NBN plans, giving consumers tips on how to choose the plan that suits their needs. At ACCAN, we believe that low-cost shouldn't mean poorer quality, so it's important that consumers have tools that can help them choose good value plans. The Feature lets you know which providers are offering the best value deals and gives advice on how to check quality, added extras and more.

In our Spotlight article we cover what consumers need to know about mobile data. We're now using more data than ever before on our mobile phones, so consumers should be aware of things like megabyte charging, excess data charges and how much data gets used by common internet activities, such as streaming on YouTube and checking Facebook. Check out the Spotlight article to learn more about how mobile data is counted and how you get charged for it.

In line with our Conference, the Policy article delves into communications affordability and the affordability divide that sees low-income consumers spending a significantly higher proportion of their income on telecommunications than the majority of Australians. Over 2.5 million people live in households below the poverty line and according to research, many of these consumers struggle to maintain telecommunications connectivity.

The Grants article explores a project that was completed by Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media – Using radio to reach Indigenous consumers. The project produced a series of short radio programs designed to provide Indigenous consumers with culturally-appropriate consumer information about mobile phones. These recordings are available in the Grants section of the ACCAN website.

For all the latest ACCAN updates, follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/accanau](http://www.facebook.com/accanau)) or Twitter ([www.twitter.com/ACCAN\\_AU](http://www.twitter.com/ACCAN_AU)). As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback, please email [ceo@accan.org.au](mailto:ceo@accan.org.au) or call me on 02 9288 4000 / TTY 02 9281 5322.

Warm regards  
**Teresa Corbin**  
ACCAN CEO

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## Complaint fatigue persists among telco consumers

ACCAN commissioned a survey in May that found real complaint levels are still high, despite decreasing escalated complaints reported to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO).

According to the survey, 46 per cent of telco consumers reported having a problem with their phone or internet provider in the last year. This represents more than 8.5 million Australians.

Around one third of respondents (38 per cent) who had a problem with their phone or internet service, said that they complained to their provider and were dissatisfied with the response from the telco.

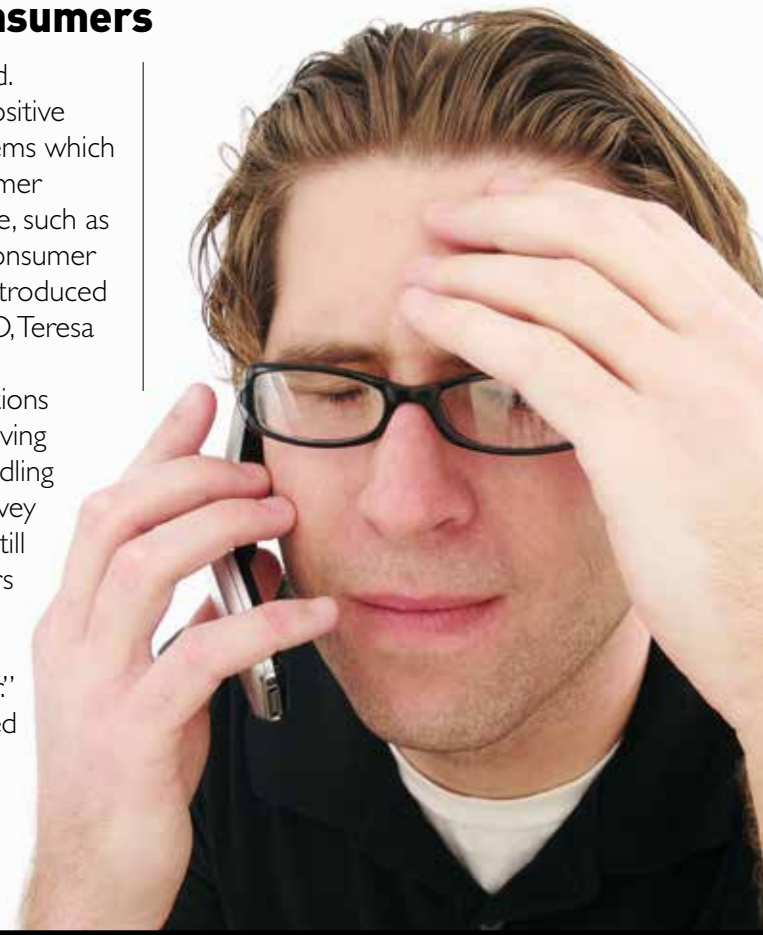
However, only nine per cent of these consumers escalated their complaint to the TIO. This suggests that phone and internet providers have not improved the proportion of

complaints that are resolved.

"The survey showed a positive downwards trend in problems which is the result of good consumer protections that are in place, such as the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code introduced in 2012," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin.

"These consumer protections have also seen telcos improving their internal complaint handling processes, however, the survey clearly shows that there is still a high number of consumers who are dissatisfied with how their complaint was resolved with their provider."

The survey was completed by Galaxy Research with 1100 respondents, representative of the Australian population.



## Braille CapTel launch

In May ACCAN hosted the launch of an innovative caption-to-braille service that is being trialled in Australia and is a world first.

The new technology pairs a CapTel (captioned telephone) handset with a braille display, which allows people who are deaf and have low/no vision to speak on the phone and read the response.

The launch saw Victorian woman, Michelle Stevens, become the first deafblind Australian to make a telephone call.

"Having phone conversations with

friends and calling my university - using my voice - will be fantastic," Ms Stevens said.

"The deafblind community will find it really valuable, especially the many older blind people who are losing their hearing; I think it will make a huge difference to their lives and save a lot of time."

Braille CapTel is being trialled in three states by the national non-profit organisation, Conexu, which promotes communications technology for deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired people.



## ACCAN's My Phone Rights app re-launched

We have just re-launched the My Phone Rights app. You can now download the updated version if you have an iOS or Android phone.

We've added some new features including Auslan translations of the video guides and an all new video on how to use less data on your smartphone.

The app contains a wealth of useful information on how to deal with issues with your phone or internet service, how to troubleshoot problems and information around billing and phone warranties.

In the app you'll also find contact details for a range of telcos and a feature that allows you to input information to keep track of a complaint.

Download the app for free from the iOS App Store or Google Play Store.

## 1800 calls now free for most Australians

From 1 July, 2015 onwards, calls to 1800 numbers from Vodafone mobile phones are free.

With the big three mobile providers - Telstra, Optus and Vodafone - now all offering these calls for free, the majority of Australians will no longer be paying for these.

ACCAN, along with ACOSS and Financial Counselling Australia, have been calling for this change for a number of years.

"We're pleased to see that most Australians will now be able to call 1800 numbers for free from their mobile phones and we encourage all of the telcos that haven't already done so to make this change," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin.

Many essential services, such as Centrelink, counselling and mental health services use 1800 numbers. It's important that consumers, particularly low-income consumers who use pre-paid services, can contact these organisations at no cost.



## 2015 ACCAN Grants Scheme projects

In June, ACCAN announced the successful projects for the 2015 Grants Round.

The Scheme has remained competitive, receiving 66 applications from a range of research, private sector and community organisations.

"This year's applications represented a fascinating blend of emerging technology as well as long-standing consumer challenges," said ACCAN Deputy CEO, Narelle Clark. "We congratulate the successful candidates and look forward to working with them on these tremendous projects."

Our Grants projects inform ACCAN's work and contribute to the research evidence base to improve outcomes for consumers, regulators and service providers in the telecommunications market.

Some of the topic areas covered include: accessibility, remote communications, 3D printing and video on demand services.

For more information on the 2015 Grants Scheme projects go to [accan.org.au/grants](http://accan.org.au/grants).



## ACCAN's Member Advisory Forum

After launching a new consumer consultation framework, ACCAN held its first Members Advisory Forum in June. The first Small Business Advisory Forum was also held in June.

Both events were successful, attracting representatives from ACCAN's membership and the small business community to discuss issues and policy

priorities.

The updated consultation framework also includes a Disability Advisory Forum and Indigenous Advisory Forum. The forums replace the ACCAN Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs (SACCA) and Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (SACDI).

With the NBN rollout picking up some momentum and about to reach 500,000 premises, it's time to check out the best value plans on the market. We've had a running debate around the ACCAN office about what good value actually means in a telco product – is it the cheapest? What about quality? Good value means different things to different people, for most people it's probably the best quality you can afford.

### 1. Check ISP quality

For the occasional user, who just gets online for email and a little web browsing, most NBN products will easily perform to your needs. But to get the most out of the extra NBN speed you'll want to start pulling down high definition video. Whether it is for overseas video chatting, entertainment, tele-health or work, video performance is the main measure of a good quality internet service provider (ISP).

Previously you might have gone with a tried and tested provider, like Telstra or Optus, or taken a stab in the dark with another provider. Now there are a couple of tools to help you compare ISP performance quality. First, there is the Google Video Quality Report which shows the average YouTube video performance over a 24-hour period for most providers in your area. Second, Netflix has ranked the ISPs based on the average speed each delivered its video content. Both have their limitations, like not distinguishing between NBN and non-NBN services, but they provide a good rule of thumb. More on these in our Tips article.

### 2. Get enough data

With all of these new services comes much higher data downloads. NBN released statistics at the end of 2014 which found the average NBN account downloaded 83GB per month – which is 43 per cent more than the national average (58GB). This is set to grow with

# Tips for picking a good value NBN internet plan



the launch of streaming services like Netflix. iiNet reported a 25 per cent jump in network traffic in the month of the Netflix launch. Given this demand for data we'd advise an average user who wants to use streaming services to look at offers with at least 100GB of data per month.

### 3. Compare cost

Anyone who has looked at a mobile phone contract knows you need an accounting degree to figure them out. Internet contracts aren't much easier – terms like, peak and off-peak, shaping, speed tiers, set-up fees, monthly fees and early termination fees are overwhelming. Some general rules are to:

- Avoid offers that split data into "peak and off-peak". We analysed a range of plans and found only one with this split which was still good value.
- Balance big set-up costs against the

monthly fee; we found some telcos with no set-up cost and low monthly fees, so it pays to shop around.

- Make sure you're comparing like with like. NBN products allow you to pay for the speed you want; most providers have four different tiers of speed.

### 4. Added extras

At ACCAN we're pretty sceptical about bundled extras – while they may be advertised as free, you usually end up paying for them through higher overall prices. Extras can also make it difficult to compare offers because you don't always know the cost of the individual components.

**Voice** – Even basic NBN plans tend to be bundled with a voice service. This is either Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) or a standard telephone service. VoIP services tend

to be a lot cheaper because they run over the top of the internet rather than the dedicated line of the standard telephone service. This means they can be subject to slow downs or "lag", but the technology is improving all the time and it is getting harder to tell the difference in quality between the two.

Although if you have medical and/or security alarms it's best to stick with a standard telephone service.

**Entertainment** – One of the big advantages of the NBN is its ability to stream high definition video. This means you can take advantage of the plethora of streaming services like Stan, Presto, Netflix and Quickflix. Some ISPs will throw in a few months free subscription to a streaming service or zero rate any data you use on these applications. This means any data you use watching content on a streaming service won't be counted towards your monthly data limit.

### Who offers the best value?

Company	Cost	Data Inclusion	Setup Cost	Phone	HD Streams	Star Rating
activ8me	\$49.95	100GB \$0.5 per GB	\$99 No Modem	Additional Extra VoIP or Phone	94%	★★★★★
Skymesh	\$59.95	120GB \$0.5 per GB	- No Modem	Additional Extra VoIP or Phone	87%	★★★★☆
TPG	\$59.95	Unlimited	\$129.95 Modem	Included Phone	78%	★★★★☆
iiNet	\$69.90	250GB \$0.28 per GB	\$79.95 Modem	Included VoIP	75%	★★★☆☆
Internode	\$69.95	300GB \$0.23 per GB	\$99 No Modem	Additional Extra VoIP or Phone	75%	★★★☆☆
Belong <small>(owned by Telstra)</small>	\$55.00	100GB \$0.55 per GB	\$60 Modem	N/A	74%	★★★☆☆

### More info:

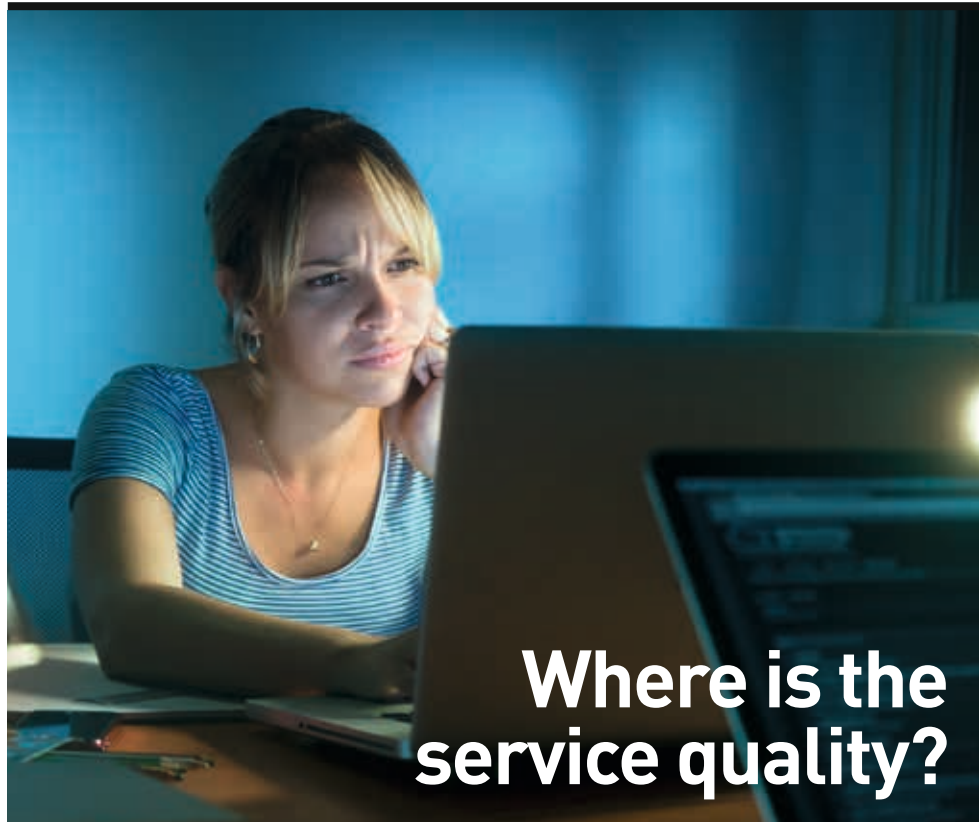
**Data inclusions:** The average NBN subscriber uses 83GB a month. Only the cheapest 12/1mbps plans, from each provider, with at least this amount of data (excluding off-peak data) were compared in the table.

**Setup costs:** Some providers waive setup costs if you sign on to a long term contract. For ease of comparison we only compared costs of month-to-month plans.

**HD Streams:** This is based on peak hour performance as per Google's Video Quality Report in the Sydney area on 27/5/15. A higher score means a greater proportion of HD video delivered to subscribers.

**Star rating:** This comparison does not represent the full market, only those providers which met the basic requirements outlined left.

Plans correct as at 27 July, 2015.



## Where is the service quality?

Some elements of internet plans are easy to compare –for example the price, the speed, data offered and the terms and conditions from different providers. But comparing the quality of the service is not so easy.

### Is quality really a problem in Australia?

Previous studies and consumer feedback indicates that service quality is a problem in Australia. The Department of Communications estimated that only three per cent of premises have A rated quality broadband.

### How to pick a quality service provider?

This is really difficult. There are a few websites and tools that compare quality and services. These are outlined in this article. Keep in mind that these websites only provide estimates, averages and guidelines. The service you receive may differ significantly!

### myBroadband

The first place to check is the Department of Communications' myBroadband website ([www.mybroadband.communications.gov.au](http://www.mybroadband.communications.gov.au)). This provides an estimation of services available and expected level of quality for your address. It rates the availability of services and quality on a scale; A being the highest and E being the lowest.

Consumers should be aware that the actual service that they receive may differ from the estimation given on the myBroadband website. It will depend on a number of factors, such as the equipment in the house and the provider. The myBroadband website doesn't give information on which provider offers the best quality service for your premises.

### Google Video Quality Report

Google rates video quality by providers, time of day and location. It is based on how quickly YouTube videos have downloaded for customers. Google recommends

that consumers should choose broadband services that rate at least 90 per cent in order to have a great user experience.

Some providers are rated as HD verified providers, for example Planet ISP, Pivot, SkyMesh and Telstra Cable Broadband.

Others rank poorly, particularly during the peak periods. For example, when we checked on 10 June, 2015 between 8pm-9pm, the following networks scored less than 50 per cent (this means that more than half of all connections will have difficulty downloading a high definition movie during this time); iTalkBB, EscapeNet, Yless4U Regional Broadband, Dodo DSL and Dial up, Exetel, TSN Internet, SpinTel and MyNetPhone.

Access the Video Quality Report at this web address: [google.com/get/videoqualityreport](http://google.com/get/videoqualityreport).

### Netflix Speed Index

Earlier this year Netflix started to release the average download speed during peak internet times by providers. Faster Netflix performance generally means better picture quality, quicker start times and fewer interruptions.

In May, TPG (3.38Mbps) and iiNet (3.36Mbps) topped the poll, while Dodo/Primus (2.39Mbps) and Telstra (2.32Mbps) scored the lowest.

The Netflix Speed Index is available online at this web address: [ispspeedindex.netflix.com/australia](http://ispspeedindex.netflix.com/australia).

### Check the quality!

If your internet provider is not delivering on its promise, or you are looking to get a new broadband service – it is vital that you check the quality of the service.

Not every provider is the same and the cheapest plan is not always the best.

## Yarning and Learning

**“We all have these phones, the mobile ones. Most people now, especially the young ones. But most people now, yes, have them.”**

This year, Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media (QRAM) completed an exciting project to spread important messages and information about phone and internet issues to remote Indigenous communities.

Some of the issues covered include:

- How to save money on your bills
- What to do if you receive a high bill
- How to choose an internet service provider
- How to make a complaint about your mobile phone service
- How to read your phone bill
- How to use less data on your smartphone
- Cyberbullying and safe use of social media

These radio segments were narrated by Aboriginal actor and comedian, Anthony Newcastle, and broadcast on over 80 radio stations across the country.

As well as producing these radio segments, QRAM also conducted focus groups and interviews with Indigenous people living in remote areas. This helped the QRAM team understand the common issues people were experiencing.

Unsurprisingly, the geographic isolation of many of these remote communities means that people rely on their mobile phones to feel safe, keep family updated and to connect with friends.

The interviews and focus groups found that many people did not know what to do if something went wrong with their mobile or internet service.

For example, one community member from the Kimberley said, “We don't know who you talk to. If your

phone is broke or whatever, or you got some problem, we don't know who to talk to. We can't go to the store and sort it out.”

In the radio broadcasts the steps to deal with problems were discussed, including how to resolve a complaint with your phone or internet provider, and the role of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO).

The project's final report was released in July and you can access the radio segments on the ACCAN website in the Grants section ([accan.org.au/grants/current-grants](http://accan.org.au/grants/current-grants)).

QRAM has also been awarded a Grant in the 2015 Round to complete a program that will see them work with remote community members and design agency Gilimbaa to produce printed and audio resources in five key Indigenous languages. The resources will provide similar information on telecommunications products and services for Indigenous communities.



# All about mobile data

Australians are spending more and more time on their mobile phones. As a result we're using more mobile data than ever before.



According to the ACMA Communications Report 2013-14, in the quarter ending June 2014, Australians downloaded 38,734 terabytes of data on mobile devices. This was a 97.3 per cent increase when compared to the same quarter a year earlier!

With the introduction of 4G, our data needs are forecasted to grow even bigger in the future. Because of this, it's important to take into account how your provider counts your data and also how much they charge for excess data used above your monthly allowance.

### Megabyte charging

Did you know that telcos have different ways of counting mobile data? Some count by the kilobyte (KB) and some round-up to the nearest megabyte (MB).

If you look at your phone bill, you'll notice that your data usage is divided in to what telcos call 'sessions'. Listed next to each session will be the amount of data used.

If your telco counts data by the KB, generally speaking, you'll be getting more value out of your data allowance because your provider won't be rounding the sessions up to the nearest MB. Plans that round data up to the nearest MB may use up your data allowance much quicker than usual. So you may not be getting good value out of your plan.

### Excess data charges

When you exceed your monthly limit, your telco will either add an extra block of data to your account at an extra charge (usually around \$10 for 1GB), or charge you a fee for every megabyte used above your limit.



Charges for excess data have dropped significantly, so not as many consumers are getting hit with bill shock. However, 1GB blocks of data may not always be good value or convenient for consumers, especially if these kick in at the end of the billing cycle when you can't use up all of the data you've been forced to pay for.

Each telco has a different approach to excess data charges. We recommend finding out what your provider charges for excess data so you don't get stung by extra fees.

Also keep in mind that providers must send you SMS alerts to let you know when you've used 50, 85 and 100 per cent of your monthly data limit. Don't ignore these alerts, they could save you money.

You should also track your data usage using the app provided by your telco. Be aware that the information in your provider's app can be up to 48 hours old (this also applies to the SMS alerts). This means that by the time you realise you're getting close to your limit, you may have already exceeded it.

### Data roll-over

Our research from March 2014, found that more than half of mobile phone customers with an included allowance did not use all of their monthly call, text and data inclusions. For a number of years, ACCAN has called on the telcos to introduce data roll-over so consumers can use the data that

they've actually paid for.

In March 2015, we welcomed Virgin Mobile's introduction of data roll-over. On new Virgin Mobile plans, consumers can now roll-over their unused data to the next month.

In July, Optus introduced a data roll-over feature for its My Prepaid Monthly Plus plans. Make sure you read the critical information summary (CIS) provided with the plan though, because there are conditions that apply to this data roll-over feature.

### What uses the most data?

- The amount of data used by **streaming services** (Netflix, Presto, Stan) depends on which one you're using and the quality of the video. Streaming High Definition content can use up to 3GB per hour!
- Streaming a 10 minute video on **YouTube** in standard definition uses about 70MB.
- Browsing **Facebook** for 10 minutes uses up about 3MB, but this will be higher if you're uploading or viewing photos and videos.
- Making a 10 minute call on **Skype** uses about 10MB.
- Sending or receiving 40 **emails** without attachments uses about 2MB.
- Browsing five different **webpages** uses about 2MB.
- Navigating for 10 minutes on **Google Maps** uses about 6MB.



## Affordable communications for all Australians

Access to affordable telecommunications for all consumers is one of ACCAN's three key objectives. Affordability is becoming increasingly important as access to telecommunications services is essential for full economic, social and cultural participation. For example, the main method of communicating with many government agencies is increasingly through online channels and this will only become more widespread with the Coalition Government's Digital First Strategy. This Strategy will require all government services and public interactions to be available online by 2017.

In order for the Digital First Strategy to be a success, all Australians need to have access to the internet. There are a number of factors that contribute to a lack of internet uptake, and affordability is often found to be a factor.

In 2014, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that 98 per cent of households with a household income of \$120,000 or more had internet

access, compared to only 57 per cent of households with a household income of less than \$40,000.

A 2013 study conducted by Anglicare Victoria found that 50 per cent of those on low incomes cannot afford internet access.

While these statistics don't provide the whole picture on why people aren't connected, they do highlight that income levels are inextricably linked to internet uptake.

### Current safety net

Currently in Australia, there are limited targeted solutions available to help low income consumers pay for their phone or internet service.

One provision is the Federal Government's Telephone Allowance for eligible pensioners and others in receipt of a Centrelink payment. This, however, is only available for fixed line services.

Telstra also offers a number of services for low-income consumers through its *Access for Everyone* package. The package provides discounts on services and has provisions to help

consumers in crisis and emergency situations.

Internationally, examples from the US and UK have seen telecommunications providers adapting to the changing landscape and offering discounts on mobile and broadband services and not just on fixed-line telephones. For example, recently the US Federal Communications Commission proposed extending its Lifeline service – which subsidises the monthly cost of a landline for eligible Americans – to also cover broadband and mobile services.

### Future Options

The array of products which make up Telstra's current low-income package undoubtedly provide vital assistance for many low-income consumers as well as for people facing financial hardship. However, there is no industry-wide obligation to provide low income measures. It is possible that there are other mechanisms which could provide broader connectivity benefits and certainty for low-income consumers.

These could include:

- Social tariffs directed to mobile broadband assistance, which cover set up costs as well as ongoing costs
- More low cost packages specifically targeted for low-income consumers
- Introduction of an industry-wide low-income package
- A redefined Universal Service Obligation (USO) to provide universal access to mobile and broadband services
- Government allocation of a minimum broadband connection with the pension
- Telecommunications vouchers as a form of subsidy

These and other ideas that will ensure communications services are affordable for all Australians in the future will be explored at the 2015 ACCAN National Conference.

## Affordability snapshot

In 2012, 2.55 million people & 603,000 children in Australia were living below the poverty line. In 2012 the poverty line for a single adult was \$400/week; for a couple with 2 children it was \$841/week (ACOSS)

66% of low-income consumers had difficulty paying for their mobile service in the past 12 months according to an Anglicare Victoria survey (2013)

ABS stats show that people in higher incomes are more likely to have an internet connection at home than those on lower incomes

Key telco issues from SACOSS's Cost of Living report for March quarter 2015 included:

- Access costs
- Poor value for money low-cost products such as pre-paid services
- Excess data charges

ACCAN funded research found that 95% of homeless people own a mobile, however, this does not guarantee access to phone and internet services (Humphry, 2014). Mobile phones provide a lifeline for these consumers so these must be affordable and available to them

While 83% of the population were internet users (ABS, 2014), those aged 65 or over had the lowest internet usage – only 46% of total persons in the age group. Affordability can be a barrier to getting connected

Affordable internet and telephone services are important because they provide a vital link for all Australians to perform tasks like:

- paying bills
- accessing government services, education and employment
- staying connected with family & friends
- online shopping - 76% of internet users purchase or order goods online (ABS, 2014)



# Enabling a digitally inclusive society

Technology is an important aspect to ensuring that Australia is an inclusive society. Not-for-profit organisation, Infoxchange, works to deliver technology solutions to achieve social justice and increased digital inclusion.

Infoxchange offers a range of products and services to the community sector that drive improvements to the delivery of frontline services and better outcomes for community members.

It also works directly with the community, helping improve the digital skills of individuals (Go Digi), connecting people who are homeless or at risk

with essential services (Ask Izzy) and providing career opportunities for young people facing serious disadvantage (YouthSpark IT Career Pathways).

The organisation works with partners across the government, corporate and community sectors to reach its goals. These partnerships have helped the organisation to create lasting impacts for many.

We spoke to CEO, David Spriggs, to learn more about Infoxchange's work to improve social equity and digital inclusion.

## Technology and social equity

With the world increasingly moving online, technology needs to be integrated into social equity initiatives, says Mr Spriggs.

"Technology now affects almost every dimension of how we live, work and play – from getting an education, accessing health care, communicating with friends to getting a job," he adds. "In today's digital world, it should come as a shock that 1 in 5 Australians are not online – that's almost four million people."

Those figures are somewhat worrying in the lead up to the implementation of the Federal Government's Digital First Strategy that will require all government services and public interactions to be available online by 2017.

Groups such as low-income earners, older Australians or those living with a disability may be disadvantaged when it comes to accessing essential government services, such as Centrelink, if social equity is not upheld.

"If you are disabled, in a low-income household or dependent on a government allowance, then your likelihood of not having internet at home is significantly higher than the national average," says Spriggs. "Ageing community members, Indigenous, and culturally and linguistically diverse households are also disproportionately affected."

People use the internet to perform many tasks, such as online shopping or banking. Lack of access to technology prevents communities and individuals from accessing the substantial economic and social benefits offered online.

It's important that all Australians have equal access to these services because the internet provides job and education opportunities, as well as benefits to health and wellbeing.

## Digital inclusion

Infoxchange's digital inclusion initiatives respond to this inequity. It has implemented two of Australia's largest digital inclusion initiatives, which provide internet and computer access to residents in public housing estates in inner city Melbourne.

"By providing internet access and computers to residents, these projects generate \$5.9 million in benefits for residents and the broader community," says Mr Spriggs. "Over five years, residents benefited from access to education and jobs, as well as improved health and well-being."

A more recent example of the organisation's digital inclusion work is the four-year national digital literacy program, Go Digi (godigi.org.au), delivered in partnership with Australia Post.

"Go Digi aims to improve the digital confidence and skills of more than 300,000 Australians. It focuses on building skills through face-to-face learning, community mentoring and



“  
In today's digital world, it should come as a shock that 1 in 5 Australians are not online  
”

leveraging network partners already established within their communities."

Further raising awareness of inclusion issues, in 2016 Infoxchange will launch the **National Year of Digital Inclusion**, which builds on Go Digi and celebrates the benefits of digital literacy and digital inclusion in Australia.

It will feature a range of events across Australia that will put a spotlight on the positive digital literacy work that is happening in communities across the country. This will include Community Pop-Up Festivals and a conversations program in major cities and regional centres.

Infoxchange will be launching the National Year of Digital Inclusion on day

two of the 2015 ACCAN National Conference.

## Future projects

Later this year, Infoxchange will launch an app that will help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find shelter, food and support services.

"The Ask Izzy project is a whole of community partnership with support from government, corporate and community sector organisations. We are grateful for the financial and in-kind support of founding partners Google, REA Group and News Corp Australia without whom this project would not have been possible."

For someone who doesn't have a regular place to stay, a mobile phone

becomes a critical lifeline connecting them to friends, family and important services. The ACCAN and University of Sydney report 'Homeless and Connected' showed that 95 per cent of people who are homeless have a mobile phone and of those, 77 per cent have a smartphone.

The Infoxchange app will reach out to those 1 in 200 Australians who are homeless every night and give them access to critical information about the services they need, drawing on the Service Seeker database of over 340,000 services across Australia.



Infoxchange CEO,  
David Spriggs