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**Not ‘appy with mobile coverage? Phone Rights will help**

**MEDIA**

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*The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak communications consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the* *Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.*

The peak telecommunications consumer advocacy group, ACCAN, is today launching a free smartphone app that will allow mobile phone customers to test their reception and log where and when they are experiencing call dropouts, delayed text messages and slow internet so they can make a complaint to their provider.

The ACCAN “Phone Rights” app also offers consumers and small businesses advice on how to resolve common phone and internet issues through tip sheets and video guides. Issues include contracts, bill shock, global roaming and data charges.

There is also a function that allows you to contact your provider or make a complaint to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) directly through the app and set reminders in your calendar about when to follow up.

The information in the app is based on the new Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code, which outlines the rules and obligations of telecommunications providers in dealing with customers.

“This app is the ultimate guide for customers about their rights as a phone or internet customer,” said ACCAN spokeswoman Elise Davidson. “The rules around telecommunications can be really confusing for customers and this app makes it simple for consumers to figure out how to get a problem fixed.”

Complaints about mobile coverage are one of the biggest bugbears of mobile phone customers in Australia. In 2011-12, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman received 29,783 complaints about mobile coverage. This was a 4 per cent increase from 2010-11.

“One of the most frequent complaints we hear from customers is about call dropouts and slow internet. Mobile blackspots are common – not only in regional areas, but in cities too,” said Ms Davidson. “If you’ve signed up to a contract and you’re not getting the service you’re paying for, it’s worth making a complaint to your provider about it. This app makes it easy by providing you with a record of where and when problems are occurring.”

**Download Phone Rights app:** [**iPhone (iTunes store)**](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/phone-rights/id611652499?mt=8) **Download Phone Rights app:** [**Android (Google Play store)**](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bizarmobile.accan&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLDEsImNvbS5iaXphcm1vYmlsZS5hY2NhbiJd)

**For more information on the app, visit** [**www.accan.org.au/phonerights**](http://www.accan.org.au/phonerights)

**ACCAN has a range of tip sheets for consumers about what to do if they receive an unexpectedly high bill, can’t afford to pay their bill, or want to avoid expensive global roaming charges. Visit** [**www.accan.org.au/tipsheets**](http://www.accan.org.au/tipsheets)

**Phone Rights Features**

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| Log Poor Reception | * Use this tool to log when and where you’ve had poor mobile reception to make a complaint to your provider |
| Phone/Internet Problems? | * Select which problem you’re having and find out how to quickly resolve it. |
| Tips & Advice | * Guidance on your rights, when and how to complain. |
| My Complaints | * Use this tool to contact your provider, log a complaint and access your complaint history so you can easily follow up on your complaint. |
| Video guides | * Practical video guides with advice about a range of topics |
| Contact the TIO | * Contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) if you are unable to resolve a complaint with your provider. |

**Background**The Phone Rights smartphone application was funded by the late Maureen Le Blanc, who greatly contributed to telecommunications consumer representation in Australia over a 20-year period. It is fitting that this generous bequest – which Maureen intended to be used for consumer education – has resulted in this smartphone app, which literally puts the power of consumer rights into consumers’ hands.

**About ACCAN**The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak body for consumer telecommunications advocacy. ACCAN focuses on goods and services encompassed by the converging areas of telecommunications, the internet and broadcasting, including both current and emerging technologies. Put simply, we want to make sure the telecommunications market is fair for all consumers.