# Quarter 1, FY16-17

The summary below outlines ACCAN's activities from 1 June, 2016 to 31 August, 2016.

ACCAN has had an intense but very successful three months, consulting with our members on 12 inquiries, developing evidence based policy positions and submitting considered consumer input. Inquiries of core significance for communications consumers include three Productivity Commission inquiries – *USO, Data Availability and Use*, and *ACL Enforcement and Administration*. Our work with the ACCC has continued with our contribution to the *Broadband Speeds Inquiry*, and representing the end user position on the *Wholesale ADSL Service Declaration*, and *Variations to the nbn Standard Access Undertaking* (SAU). We have worked with the ACMA on the *Pre-paid Identity Checking Determination* review and the *Review of Captioning Obligations in the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA)*, and with the Department of Communications and the Arts on the *ACMA Review*, *Do Not Call Register regulations,* and access to telecommunications by Deafblind consumers following the *NRS Review*. Our engagement with the TIO has included comment on the draft revised *Financial Hardship Guide*, and meeting with the new Ombudsman to better understand the TIO's approach to systemic and other issues. We have also raised consumer concerns about a national *Trusted Digital Identity Framework* with the Digital Transformation Office in writing and in a face to face meeting, along with member privacy organisations.

We have progressed our policy priorities steadily over the period. Our advocacy for better communications for poorly served areas included developing our Get Connected ADSL Map as an information resource for consumers to get improved services while waiting for NBN services; attending member events and meetings to share information about NBN roll out issues, and discuss solutions to address poor mobile coverage and choice of provider. Our representations for improved accessibility of free to air TV and the introduction of audio description on the ABC included requesting Minister Fifield's support on the ABC's Q&A show, and engaging with the ACMA's review of the BSA. The acknowledgement by the Minister for Finance of ACCAN's work with the Department of Finance and Standards Australia on the local adoption of a European standard in public procurement of ICT was also very satisfying. We significantly advanced our future consumer protections priority through our major submission to the Productivity Commission's USO inquiry. We have worked for improved affordability of services in collaboration with SACOSS to develop a deeper evidence base for reforms of the Centrelink Telephone Allowance, as well as engaging with industry and the TIO on hardship reforms and low income measures. We have advanced core consumer privacy priorities this quarter through our work with the Digital Transformation Office on digital identity, meetings with expert stakeholders such as Information Integrity Solutions. Our Productivity Commission submission on Data Availability highlighted the need for measures to reduce the risk of consumer re-identification. We also made representations to the ACMA identifying the harms if the CND Code is deregistered.

All Grants Scheme projects are tracking well against the set milestones. Launch events for the final report from the *Improving the Communication of Privacy Information to Consumers* and '*Affordable access'* projects are scheduled at the ACCAN National Conference. The resources from both projects are available online. Reports from the '*Our Phones, Our Rights'* and '*Going online on behalf of others'* projects have been published on the ACCAN website. The University of Melbourne white paper *3D Printing Rights & Responsibilities: consumer perceptions & realities* was launched 11 August at a function hosted by the Melbourne Networked Society Institute. Furthermore, consumer resources prepared by the '*Accessing video on demand'* are also scheduled for launch just prior to the ACCAN conference in both Perth (8 September) and Sydney (13 September).

The ACCAN research project assessing consumer comprehension of telecommunications agreements is being finalised in the report *Confident, but Confounded,* and will be released at the ACCAN

Conference. The two new research projects commenced in the last quarter are close to completion. The ADSL *Availability Project* accurately identifies geographic areas across Australia without adequate access to broadband services and the geospatial map created in this project will be made public shortly after the ACCAN conference once briefings with service providers are complete. The assessment of the effectiveness of the Centrelink Telephone Allowance and level of the telecommunications 'poverty premium' is complete and the report will be finalised in the next quarter. The final report from Infoxchange on *Social Housing Social Broadband* on broadband availability in social housing and is still being edited to ensure accuracy and is due out in the next quarter.

The 2016 Round recommendations were put to the ACCAN Board at its 8 June, 2016 meeting and were approved. All new grant projects have contracts in place that appropriately represent the milestones and deliverables of the projects. Only one project remains unacquitted from the previous round.

From June – August, ACCAN published 22 online news stories These articles covered a range of topics including accessibility, the 2016 ACCAN Grants projects, ACCAN's 2016 National Conference and smartphone insurance. The Winter edition of the ACCAN Magazine, *Federal Election 2016 – What communications consumers need to know,* was distributed during the quarter with articles about Government communications policies, Sky Muster broadband services and the National Relay Service. Two articles published on the ACCAN website regarding broadband speed claims proved popular with consumers. These were heavily promoted on social media, achieving positive results, to encourage consumers to have their say on the issue to the ACCC investigation.

ACCAN participated in regular meetings with key stakeholders in the June – August quarter. Two advisory forums were held and numerous stakeholder meetings across small business, Indigenous and rural and remote consumer groups.

Planning for the 2016 ACCAN National Conference is well in hand with a vibrant and informative program for 14-15 September in Sydney. New branding with the name 'ACCANect' has been adopted. The conference has excellent support with solid registrations and a range of industry sponsors in place.

Between 1 June – 31 August 2016, ACCAN generated 87 media mentions across national print, online, TV and radio, with an average of 29 items per month. The majority of ACCAN's coverage for the quarter (59 per cent) was in online coverage. Print articles made up 25 per cent of the coverage, radio accounted for 10 per cent and TV for six per cent. Three media releases were issued covering affordability, the inquiry into the USO and broadband speed claims. Over the quarter, ACCAN responded to 21 media enquiries on topics including the Customer Service Guarantee, Telstra internet outages, ADSL availability, third party mobile charges and privacy. This resulted in 22 pieces of media coverage across 17 publications/programs.