

# Quarter 2, FY18-19

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The summary below outlines ACCAN's activities from 1 September – 30 November 2018.

ACCAN met with industry through the formal quarterly meeting framework as well supplementary meetings as required. During this quarter several meetings involved high level liaison with Telstra CEO and Vodafone CEO. ACCAN was also invited to participate in the COAG Consumer Affairs Australia New Zealand meeting in Sydney this quarter. ACCAN representation on committees continues to be extensive and during this period we were actively working 19 committees. ACCAN engaged on 44 different occasions with our members and consumers groups and participated in member events. We represented consumer issues to regulators and government bodies and the ombudsman on at 26 meetings. Several presentations were prepared and delivered by the CEO including at the Commsday Congress and Perth Consumer Affairs Committee.

ACCAN has submitted to 14 consultations in the three months from September to November, nearly all of which involved substantial contributions. We have engaged with Treasury and the ACCC on the developing consumer data right regime; submitted to two ACCC access pricing inquiries (MTAS and fixed line services) as well as the ACCC review of the Facilities Access Code and inquiry into the Vodafone/TPG merger; engaged with two Parliamentary inquiries (on encryption legislation and broadcasting/audio description). We have also continued our engagement with Communications Alliance with a focus on the TCP Code review, and worked with consumer groups on joint input into the industry guideline on family and domestic violence. Our other advocacy to ensure we are representing the needs of consumers has included engaging with disability organisations involved in the Audio Description Coalition on the introduction of audio description, and our ongoing engagement with the TCP Code process.

Our achievements this quarter have been considerable. Nbn Co's decision to support consumers with non-monitored medical alarms in the NBN switchover has been an issue we have been advocating for several years; the influence of our work on the nbn Special Access Undertaking Variation was evident in the ACCC's reasoning in refusing the variation; the ACCC's work on the NBN Wholesale Service Standards Inquiry and the Department's Consumer Safeguards Review Part B (Reliability) consultation paper closely reflect ACCAN's policy positions. Our input into the Joint Parliamentary Committee's inquiry into the NBN Rollout in Rural and Regional Areas shows ACCAN's influence, with a significant number of our recommendations adopted, and nbn Co's decision to offer a SkyMuster service with some unmetered data usage is a big win for regional Australian consumers and the direct result of the advocacy of the Regional Rural and Remote Communications Coalition.

All grants projects continue, with one, Hutt St, complete and ready for acquittal. Further progress has been made in preparing for the 2019 round opening. Guidelines are in their final stages of drafting and all forecasted information has been updated on the ACCAN website. Promotion has begun through all ACCAN channels. ACCAN's research plan for 2018/19 also continues to be executed with a new project, *Incentives & sales practices*, agreed and in the field this quarter with Lonergan Research.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, ACCAN published four news stories. 'ACCAN also produced a blog that broke down [what the NBN's fixed wireless pricing changes mean for consumers](#). It outlined ACCAN's concerns that the proposed changes to pricing for fixed wireless would particularly disadvantage consumers on low incomes that live in regional areas where nbn services are provided by fixed wireless towers.

During this period, we created a simplified consumer guide to the upcoming [Consumer Data Right](#). This aimed to educate consumers on what the Consumer Data Right is and how it will impact

telecommunications consumers moving forward. It also highlighted the need to protect consumer data and information within the legislation.

In November, we designed and published an updated booklet which advised consumers on [how to prepare a digital legacy](#), and the importance of doing so. This is an important piece of consumer education material as it condensed the comprehensive content provided by the source material (University of Melbourne's report - "Death and the Internet") into a more easily read and understand format.

ACCAN total membership is 212. Organisational Membership is now at 109 organisations and 103 individuals. This reflects a slight decrease. A listing of organisational members is included as an appendix. ACCAN is continually working towards being representative of Australian communications consumers and the organisations that represent their interests. The membership base forms only one part of the methodology ACCAN uses to ensure it remains representative of the interests of communications consumers.

*ACCANect 2018 – Confidence in the Connected World* held in Sydney on 12-13 September attracted 196 attendees, over 40 speakers and 8 industry sponsors. ACCAN received very positive feedback after the event. All presentations and some videos and transcripts are available on the ACCAN website.

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The ACCAN AGM was held on 13 September. The Board met on 31 October and 1<sup>st</sup> November with a induction and training held on 31 October. Deirdre O'Donnell, ACCAN Chairperson and Chris Dodds ACCAN Deputy Chairperson were endorsed for another year in their roles.

ACCAN commenced work on its project with the NDIA to deliver a National Disability Telecommunications Information and Referral Service (Accessible telecoms [AT]) with IDEAS. Several new staff joined the team.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, ACCAN generated 449 media mentions across national print, online, TV and radio. This is an average of 150 items per month. The majority of coverage secured during this quarter was as a result of ACCAN's response to the TIO's annual report. This coverage accounted for over 50% of media mentions. The majority of media mentions from September – November appeared on TV. These were followed by radio coverage, online articles, and finally print articles. In addition to the TIO's annual report, other major issues covered in media included billing issues, the ACCC's crackdown on telco's using 'unlimited' in ads, the TCP Review, and Parts A and B of the Consumer Safeguards Review.