

INDEPENDENT GRANTS PROGRAM 2017 & 2018 GUIDELINES





Independent Grants Program
2017/18 Guidelines

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CONTACT ACCAN

Contact: Tanya Karliychuk / Narelle Clark
Email: grants@accan.org.au
Phone: (02) 9288 4000
NRS: If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the
National Relay Service: www.relayservice.gov.au
Web: www.accan.org.au/grants

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ACCAN

ACCAN's vision is for a communications market that works for consumers and supplies services that are available, accessible and affordable for all. ACCAN's mission is to act on the part of consumers, particularly those for whom the market is not working. We also research emerging consumer and technology issues and aim to inspire, inform and enable consumers to act in their own interests.

ACCAN is a not-for-profit community organisation with a broad range of individual and organisational members. ACCAN is Australia's peak body for consumer representation in communications.

ABOUT THE ACCAN GRANTS PROGRAM

The ACCAN Grants Program is administered as part of our funding agreement with the Department of Communications and the Arts to fund projects that help achieve our vision.

In this Round the Program combines both the 2017 and 2018 Rounds to have a budget of approximately \$500,000. Applicants can request funding to cover projects running for any period between 1 January 2018 and 30 June 2019. Any amount may be requested under the total budget available, however applicants should consider that ACCAN would like to see a mix of projects running over the period that would also include projects of short duration.

KEY DATES

Applications open	14 June 2017
Applications close	3pm AEST (Sydney) 25 July 2017
Applications reviewed by the Independent Panel	August - September 2017
All applicants notified of outcomes approved by the ACCAN Board	2 November 2017
Opportunity to seek feedback from ACCAN on unsuccessful applications	TWO weeks from the date of notification
Funded projects begin	1 January 2018
Funded projects completed	Prior to 30 June 2019



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THE BASICS

Through the ACCAN Grants Program we seek to enable consumers to navigate the communications market, and to establish a sound body of evidence for representation on behalf of the communications consumer.

SCOPE

The ACCAN Grants Program focuses on outcomes for consumers. The Program funds research, representation, or education projects that address issues for communications consumers in Australia. Communications can include telecommunications, the internet, broadcasting and new or emerging communications technologies.

Projects funded under the Program look at consumer issues affecting telecommunications customers and users of communications technology. Projects can also examine behaviours in relation to communications products and services, and also on skills, literacy and familiarity with communications technology, products and services.

A consumer is an individual or a small business that acquires goods or services intended for ordinary retail use. This is not limited to direct purchase but can cover situations where goods and/or services are donated or supplied through other means.

ACCAN works on behalf of all consumers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations. We also recognise the important needs of potentially vulnerable consumers in the communications market. Projects may address the needs of large numbers of consumers, or significant needs of smaller numbers of consumers, or both.

Projects may produce outputs of different sorts in order to address consumer needs and deliver outcomes. For example, your project may fit into one, or more, of these areas:

Representation – of the interests of consumers in relation to communications issues. These projects might involve action such as developing specific submissions, undertaking policy work, participating in regulatory reviews or knowledge sharing to develop your group's capacity to advocate on consumer issues. Projects that fall under this category can be directed, for example, towards regulatory bodies, industry or consumers themselves.

Education – that empowers consumers and communities broadly to act in their own interests. These projects might include developing consumer education tools, conducting workshops, or peer education initiatives where systemic or emerging communications consumer issues exist.

Research – applied research into the social, economic, environmental or technological effects, experiences and implications of communications for consumers. These projects should use appropriate methodologies to document a particular communications consumer issue or explore the experience of a group of consumers. Outputs can include, for example, baseline data sets, research reports that detail fieldwork and findings, and articles.

Visit www.accan.org.au/grants for more information about previously funded projects.



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PROJECT AREAS

The aim of the Program is to support ACCAN's ongoing consumer education objective; to represent and maintain diverse consumer interests at the core of policy developments and industry initiatives; and to support the provision of well researched, evidence based input into government and industry consultations.

The nature and topics of projects can vary considerably, however preference will be given to cross-sector collaborative projects addressing the Program's priority themes for the Round.

Priority Themes

Availability

Examples include projects that:

- Examine and/or produce remedies for issues encountered by tenants, apartments and new developments
- Examine and/or produce remedies for issues encountered by people living in rural, regional and remote areas
- Compare or examine approaches to the universal provision of communications services

Future consumer protections

Examples include projects that identify and analyse:

- Consumer protections needed for the delivery of essential communications services
- The impact of consumer guarantees
- Consumer protection needs, including guarantees, rights, security and privacy, in the context of emerging technology such as the Internet of Things, mobile app and device based payment systems
- Comparisons of approaches to consumer protection.

Market performance in telecommunications

Examples include projects that:

- Examine the reliability and performance measures of telecommunications services and/or market behaviour in response to same
- Aid in consumer decision making by creating tools to examine usage that enable comparison between providers
- Compare and examine consumer experience with the NBN in practical terms such as migrations, connections, customer education

Affordability

Examples include:

- Projects that examine financial barriers faced by consumers or communities and/or approaches to improved affordability in the telecommunications market
- What programs, policies and interventions are used in comparable markets to improve intensity of use by low-income consumers

Accessibility

Examples include:

- Projects that look to methods of improving access to telecommunications services by people with disability
- Projects that investigate how consumers seek out and obtain information on assistive technology.



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Consumer Attitudes

Examples include:

- Projects that examine attitudes to mobile payments
- Assessments of consumer attitudes to existing consumer protections such as the USO, Customer Service Guarantee

It is critical that applications are framed in terms of a specific consumer problem and describe how the project addresses that problem.

Examples of ACCAN's current policy work can be seen at www.accan.org.au



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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ACCAN funds projects undertaken by community organisations, businesses, university researchers or individuals who satisfy the eligibility requirements. We also accept applications from individuals or groups that have formed partnerships: in these applications one party is nominated as the applicant and auspicing body.

Projects submitted in partnership with the telecommunications industry are also encouraged.

If you are interested in forming a partnership to **strengthen** your application but are unsure of how to start, please contact the ACCAN grants team. We may be able to suggest partners who have a similar interest and focus to you. It will remain the applicant's responsibility to build and maintain these partnerships, and to ensure any contractual obligations between partners are met.

In order to be eligible for assessment, applications must be completed and submitted prior to the advertised deadline and meet **all** eligibility criteria. Applications that are late, incomplete, or ineligible will **not** be assessed by the Panel.

Applications **must**:

- Be for a project that seeks to explore communications consumer issues in Australia and be consistent with ACCAN's scope (see [ACCAN Strategic Plan 2012-2017](#)).
- Provide a valid ABN.
- Be for a project to be completed between 1st January 2018 and 30th June 2019.
- Declare that should they be successful they will provide evidence of Public Liability Insurance with coverage up to \$5 million.
- Have successfully acquitted any previous funding under the ACCAN Grants Program.
- Not request funding for any of the ineligible activities listed below.

The ACCAN Grants Program does **not** provide funding for the following ineligible activities:

- Activities that contradict ACCAN's values.
- Activities primarily related to commercial product or service development.
- Activities of a partisan (party) political nature.
- Projects that have already been completed.
- Operational or ongoing activities normally funded through other arrangements.
- University or other administration levies.
- Travel costs (unless directly necessary for the project).
- General operating costs not directly attributable to the project.

PROJECT DURATION

Projects must be completed between 1st January 2018 and 30th June 2019 and be appropriate in length to the activity you propose.

Projects may span any period within this timeframe. Projects of short duration, for example for 6 months or less, are also encouraged.



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FUNDING AGREEMENTS

If your project is selected to receive a grant you will enter into a funding agreement (contract) with ACCAN. This contract will set out ACCAN's requirements as well as your obligations in the delivery of the project. A sample of this contract is available to view at www.accan.org.au/grants. Funding payments are structured around the delivery of agreed project milestones.

Over the course of the project you will need to provide the following to ACCAN at a time specified in the funding agreement, or when requested:

- **Milestone deliverables**
Depending on your funding agreement, these might be reports, minutes from a reference group meeting, or other outputs at checkpoints in the progress of your project.
- **Records clearly accounting for funding provided**
Records must be kept in such a way that they could be inspected and audited when required.
- **A Project Acquittal Report**
ACCAN will provide a form for you to complete in order to evaluate the project and document the financial details of your project when it is completed.

ACCAN may also request:

- **A Project Progress Report** whereupon ACCAN will provide a form for you to complete approximately halfway through the project.

ACCAN takes a collaborative approach to grant project management and will provide regular communication and support throughout the project.

All materials created during the project will remain the intellectual property of you or your organisation and by entering into a funding agreement you agree to:

- Grant ACCAN a permanent license to all materials created during the project, including the right to sub-license, which ACCAN automatically grants to the Department of Communications and the Arts.
- Acknowledge ACCAN's support of the project in all public materials (and the Department of Communications and the Arts in supporting ACCAN).

All resources produced under the Grants Program will be expected to conform to basic accessibility principles e.g. reports formatted suitably for use with screen readers; captions on videos. ACCAN staff can provide guidance.



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ASSESSMENT

The ACCAN Grants Program assessment process is competitive, merit-based and guided by the Assessment Criteria. Eligible applications are assessed by an Independent Panel of external specialists, whose recommendations for funding must then be ratified by the ACCAN Board. The Independent Panel will endeavor to select a balance of projects that deliver the three desired outcomes of representation, education and research. There is a conflict of interest policy in place to ensure the process is fair and equitable.

Projects which investigate emerging and **highly topical issues (see Priority Themes)**, that demonstrate a high degree of **originality**, and that focus on issues which affect a **large number** of consumers or that have a **high impact** on multiple groups of consumers for whom the market is not working, will be highly regarded.

Projects that can **continue independently** after the ACCAN funding, or where the outputs are demonstrably able to be used on an **ongoing basis** will also be highly regarded.

Successful applications are those that best satisfy the selection criteria, which are weighted to reflect the priorities of the ACCAN Grants Program. The ACCAN grants team can provide information about ACCAN’s work and strategic goals to help you develop your application.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Examples of considerations made by the Panel	Weighting
Benefit to consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project seek to fill a gap and is the project an effective response to the gap? Which groups of consumers will benefit from the project? How many consumers will benefit from the project? What will the impact of the benefit be? When will consumers benefit from the project? 	20%
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the motivation for the project? Have efforts been made to identify the key stakeholders in the issue? Does the project have concrete plans to consult and engage effectively with consumers, community groups, and/or research communities? Are there strengths or assets (tangible and intangible) within the communities involved that can be built upon to provide even greater benefit? 	20%
Addresses high priority consumer issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the project address one or more of the Priority Themes? 	30%



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Assessment Criteria	Examples of considerations made by the Panel	Weighting
Technical strength of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the project objectives, outputs, plan and timeline well considered and achievable?• Does the project team have the appropriate skills and capacity to carry out the project?• If a research project, is the chosen methodology valid and appropriate?• Does the application demonstrate knowledge of previous and current work/research on the theme, including that by regulatory bodies?• Have ethics in relation to researching and working with people and partners been properly considered and addressed?	15%
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the project budget appropriate in relation to the proposed project activities, outputs and outcomes?• Would the project be able to proceed without this funding?• If in-kind contributions are noted, are they well considered?	15%

HOW TO APPLY

DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION

- Visit www.accan.org.au/grants for a list of previously funded projects and tips for applicants.
- Check your eligibility.
- Consider the Assessment Criteria, ACCAN's [Strategic Plan 2012-2017](#) and the **Priority Themes**.
- We encourage applicants to contact us before submitting an application. We are happy to discuss your idea and how it relates to the Grants Program and the Priority Themes.

APPLY ONLINE

The online application form is available at accan.smartygrants.com.au

You will be asked to create a user name and password so that you can save and edit your application as many times as you wish before submitting. Further instructions are available at the link above.

The online application form complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards. You can also contact the ACCAN grants team for a Microsoft Word version or a printed copy. The ACCAN grants team can help with questions about the application form or the online application process.

All applications must be received by ACCAN by 3:00PM AEST (Sydney) on 25 July 2017. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be assessed.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You will receive confirmation from the SmartyGrants application system when your application is submitted.



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All applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application as stated in the Key Dates section of this document.

Your application will be kept confidential and will be accessed only by relevant ACCAN staff and members of the Independent Panel. The ACCAN Board will receive some information in their role as overseer of the assessment process.

ACCAN may seek further information from applicants at any stage in the assessment process.

Projects selected for funding will be listed on the ACCAN website.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive written feedback on their applications by email, and have two weeks from the date of notification to seek further feedback from ACCAN.