

ACCANECT 2017

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Wednesday 20 September - Thursday 21 September 2017
SYDNEY



Australia's peak body for communications consumers



THIS EDITION:
The year for improving connectivity in the bush

Broadband speed claims

Mobile black spots

Indigenous consumer education

PLUS: Reliable telecommunications a necessity for Aussie cotton farmers

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.

Contact us:

Phone: 02 9288 4000
Web: accan.org.au
Twitter: @ACCAN_AU
YouTube: youtube.com/ACCANvideo
Facebook: facebook.com/accanau
Email: info@accan.org.au
You can contact ACCAN through the National Relay Service – www.relayservice.gov.au

Editor: Luke Sutton

Contributors: Tanya Karlychuk, Narelle Clark

Design: Magnesium Media
www.magnesiummedia.com.au

Cover: Design by Richard Van Der Male with images from Shutterstock

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Our CEO: Teresa Corbin

Welcome to the Autumn 2017 edition of the ACCAN Magazine. For this edition we're focusing on regional and rural telecommunications. Our Feature explores the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition of which ACCAN is a member. In late 2017, we joined with these organisations to form the Coalition and give a united voice in discussions with industry and Government. So far we've managed to bring significant attention to the issues. Follow developments and get the latest Coalition news online here: accan.org.au/rrrc-coalition.

In the Spotlight article we cover the public hearings held by the Productivity Commission on its Draft Report on the Universal Service Obligation. ACCAN and other members of the Coalition came out in force to have a say on the future delivery of landline services, which are still relevant to regional and rural consumers, especially those in areas where mobile coverage is unreliable.

Cotton Australia, a new ACCAN member, is the focus of the Members section. In the article they tell us about the telecommunications concerns of Australian cotton growers who are eager to make use of innovative technologies that make

their work more efficient.

Many of you would have heard from us late last year about the review of consumer representation undertaken by the Department of Communications and the Arts. I'm pleased to report that in late February, the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, announced that ACCAN would get a new funding contract. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members, stakeholders and supporters for their support of ACCAN throughout the review. This is a great outcome and it will ensure that the consumer voice continues to be heard in important discussions with Government and industry.

For all the latest ACCAN updates, follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/accanau) or Twitter (twitter.com/ACCAN_AU). Our smartphone app, My Phone Rights, is full of useful information for communications consumers and is available on Android and Apple smartphones. As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback, please email ceo@accan.org.au or call me on 02 9288 4000.

Warm regards
Teresa Corbin
ACCAN CEO

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Slow data speeds and NBN complaints increase



The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Annual Report 2015-16 showed an increase in complaints about slow data speeds and NBN service faults and connections.

Slow data speed complaints

increased by 48 per cent showing that this is an ongoing pain point for consumers. This was also reflected in an ACCAN survey from early 2016 that showed nearly 70 per cent of respondents had unsatisfactory

experiences with their broadband services.

The Report also showed an increase in NBN complaints with the most significant areas being service faults and connections.

While consumer complaints about NBN are growing, it was positive to see that the rate of growth in complaints is lower than the growth of active NBN services.

“There appears to be a lot of blame-shifting between retailers, nbn and contractors, when services do not work, or there are problems with installations,” said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. “Further clarification is needed on the responsibilities of each entity to ensure consumer issues are addressed as quickly as possible.”

Social housing and broadband

A report by ACCAN and Infoxchange, launched in late 2016, focused on how residents living in social housing connect to broadband.

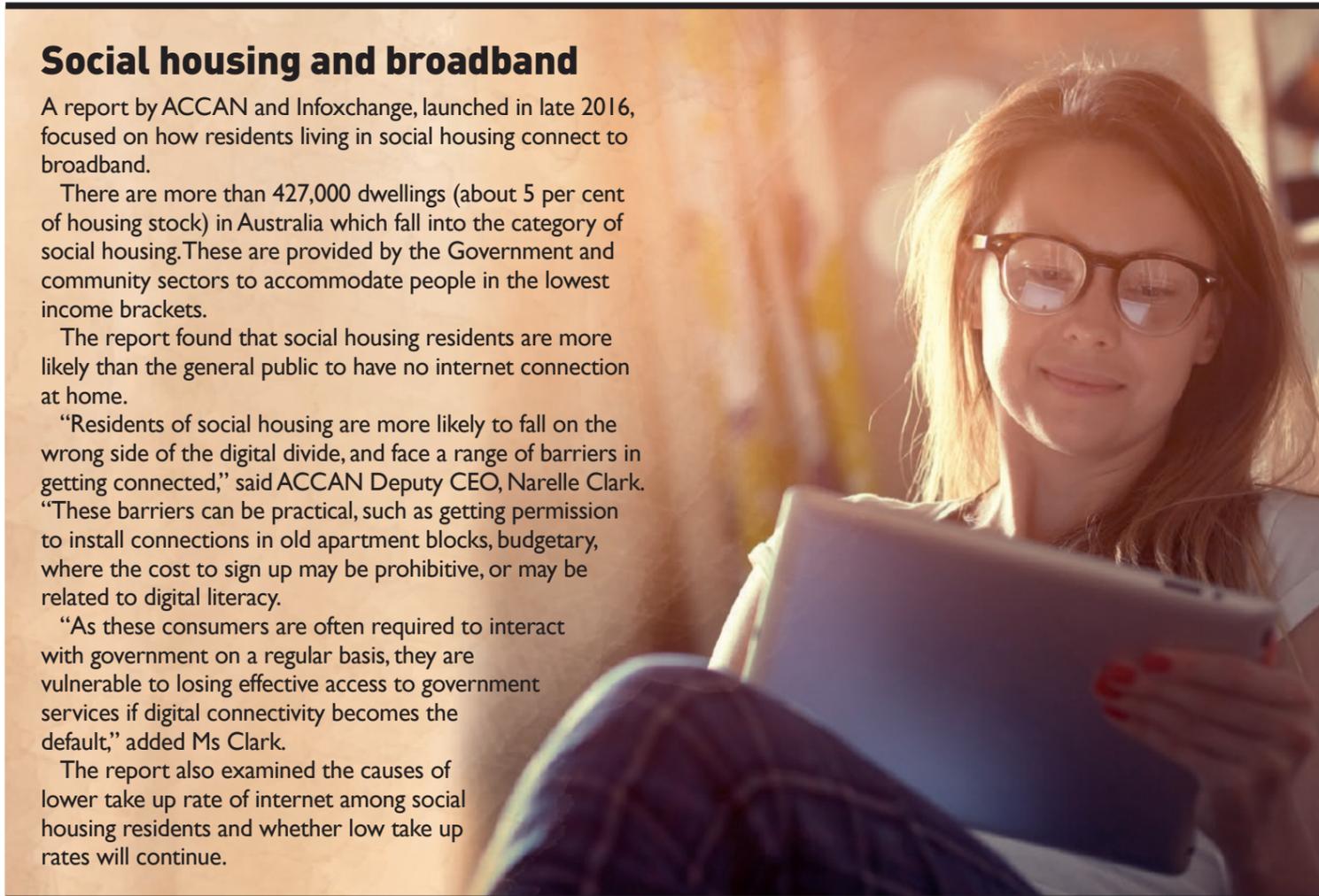
There are more than 427,000 dwellings (about 5 per cent of housing stock) in Australia which fall into the category of social housing. These are provided by the Government and community sectors to accommodate people in the lowest income brackets.

The report found that social housing residents are more likely than the general public to have no internet connection at home.

“Residents of social housing are more likely to fall on the wrong side of the digital divide, and face a range of barriers in getting connected,” said ACCAN Deputy CEO, Narelle Clark. “These barriers can be practical, such as getting permission to install connections in old apartment blocks, budgetary, where the cost to sign up may be prohibitive, or may be related to digital literacy.

“As these consumers are often required to interact with government on a regular basis, they are vulnerable to losing effective access to government services if digital connectivity becomes the default,” added Ms Clark.

The report also examined the causes of lower take up rate of internet among social housing residents and whether low take up rates will continue.



ACCC publishes principles on broadband speed claims

ACCAN welcomed the ACCC's publication of principles to help ensure internet service providers' speed claims aren't misleading under the Australian Consumer Law. These were published in February 2017.

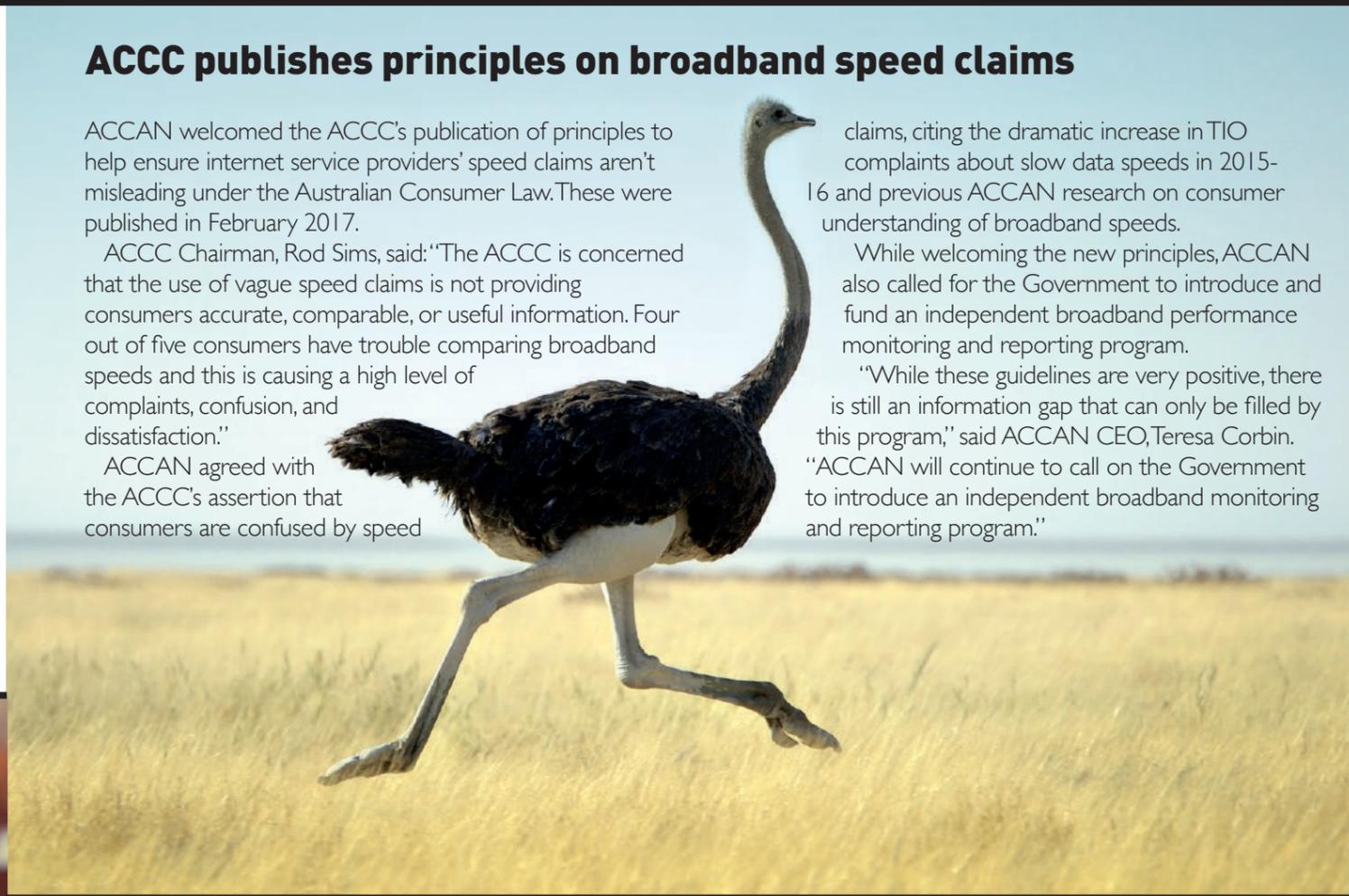
ACCC Chairman, Rod Sims, said: “The ACCC is concerned that the use of vague speed claims is not providing consumers accurate, comparable, or useful information. Four out of five consumers have trouble comparing broadband speeds and this is causing a high level of complaints, confusion, and dissatisfaction.”

ACCAN agreed with the ACCC's assertion that consumers are confused by speed

claims, citing the dramatic increase in TIO complaints about slow data speeds in 2015-16 and previous ACCAN research on consumer understanding of broadband speeds.

While welcoming the new principles, ACCAN also called for the Government to introduce and fund an independent broadband performance monitoring and reporting program.

“While these guidelines are very positive, there is still an information gap that can only be filled by this program,” said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. “ACCAN will continue to call on the Government to introduce an independent broadband monitoring and reporting program.”



Another 266 base stations funded under Mobile Black Spot Program

In December 2016, the Federal Government announced that Round 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Program would fund 266 new or upgraded mobile base stations, covering 1400 black spots.

ACCAN welcomed the announcement and was pleased to see the continued investment from Government and other organisations.

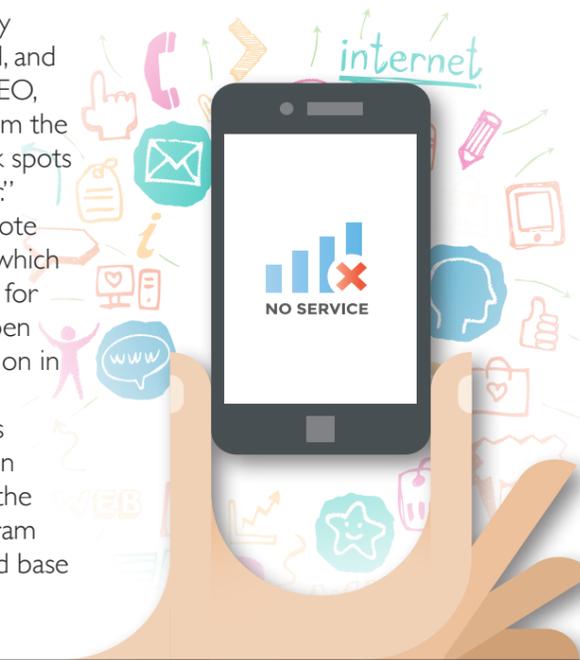
The total investment for Round 2 will be \$213 million. Co-investments will come from Telstra, Optus and Vodafone, as well as various State Governments, local Governments, businesses and community organisations.

“Mobile coverage is a high priority

issue for consumers, particularly those who live in regional, rural, and remote areas,” said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. “This is clear from the more than 10,600 mobile black spots identified in the Program so far.”

The Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition, of which ACCAN is a member, is calling for long term public funding for open access mobile network expansion in rural and regional Australia.

The Federal Government has committed a further \$60 million in funding for a third round of the Program. Round 1 of the Program delivered 499 new or upgraded base stations.



2017

THE YEAR FOR IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN THE BUSH



In late 2016, a group of like-minded advocacy organisations came together to form the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition. Broadly, the Coalition's aim is to champion better communications services for consumers and small businesses living in non-metro areas and to give these consumers a united voice in important discussions with the telecommunications industry and government.

The Coalition's membership is broad and includes ACCAN, farming bodies from across the country, as well as parents groups and other rural and regional-focused organisations.

At the time of the launch ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin said: "The Coalition was formed to highlight the collective concerns of families, businesses and communities in rural and regional Australia about the lack of equitable access to reliable and quality telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia."

Anecdotally we hear from these consumers about the poor and unreliable services that cut them off from the benefits of telecommunications services.

Since joining with these groups to form the Coalition, ACCAN has heard many stories from families, farmers and small businesses, who want improved services so they can fully participate in the digital economy, educate their children and run their businesses.

Broadband and telephone services are now essential for all consumers, no matter whether they live in regional, rural or remote areas or in the cities.

There are many opportunities in 2017 for the Coalition to have a say in consultations with government and industry to ensure that this year we can help improve connectivity in the bush.

Why we need a telecommunications Coalition for the bush

In a recent blog, Coalition member, the National Farmer's Federation (NFF), highlighted three key points as to why the Coalition is needed:

Equity: We need to bridge the digital divide

Connectivity underpins the entire breadth

of health care, education and social inclusion. Rural Australians should not be left behind their urban counterparts. Children in rural Australia need to be educated to the highest standard and our communities need to become more dynamic. In order to engage meaningfully in today's world, access to reliable, affordable and adequate voice and data services is crucial.

Economy: We need to unlock regional businesses

At present, agriculture is one of the most innovative sectors in Australia. Farmers are ready to use electronic probes to monitor soil quality and use sophisticated agricultural software to monitor yield predictions and crop histories. However, by not being able to participate in the digital age efficiently, businesses operating in rural and remote Australia are missing out. This is not only unfair; it is a real economic problem, stopping Australian agriculture from growing and evolving.

Evolution: We need to be ready to change the bush

We should not only look at what rural and remote telecommunications users are missing out on at present, but we need to look into the future and imagine the potential of a fully connected bush. By enabling regional, rural and remote Australia to utilise its full potential, regional Australia can become the engine room of Australia's economy.

What's in store for 2017?

The Coalition is looking forward to engaging in important discussions with Government and industry in consultations and reviews throughout 2017. Some of these include:

- The ACCC draft decision on Domestic Mobile Roaming
- The Department of Communications and the Arts consumer safeguards review
- The review of the Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code
- The draft report for the ACCC Telecommunications Market Study
- Round 3 of the Mobile Black Spot Program

Members of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition are:

- ACCAN
- AgForce Queensland
- Australian Forest Products Association
- Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
- Broadband for the Bush Alliance
- Cotton Australia
- Country Women's Association of Australia
- Country Women's Association of NSW
- GrainGrowers
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association
- National Farmers' Federation
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
- NSW Farmers
- The Pastoralists' Association of West Darling
- Ricegrowers' Association of Australia
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- WA Farmers





POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Regional, Rural and Remote Coalition has identified five key areas of focus for 2017. The group has drafted policy objectives that correspond to each outcome.

1 A Universal Service Obligation that is technology neutral and provides access to both voice and data.

Regional, rural and remote consumers and businesses need legislative rights to access broadband data and voice services. The service should be set out in a technology neutral manner and updatable to ensure that the service meets consumer, business and productivity needs now and into the future.

Recommendation: *Wherever Australians work and live, they should have guaranteed minimum access to data and voice services, which includes upload speeds and other features specified for existing and future residential, agriculture, health and education applications.*

There should be no degradation in the current voice services that users receive. The delivery of voice services needs to be clearly articulated, with the Universal Service Obligation and Copper Continuity Obligation remaining until a suitable alternative arrangement is in place.

Recommendation: *nbn Sky Muster does not provide an adequate baseline voice service and should not be relied on to deliver the USO. Any alternative voice services considered should ensure national equity in the standard of service delivered. Limited capacity on Sky Muster satellite will not meet baseline broadband needs in a short timeframe. Additional and alternative technologies are needed to ensure services continue to meet consumer and business needs.*



2 Customer service guarantees and reliability measures to underpin the provision of voice and data services and deliver more accountability from providers and nbn.

Ensuring safeguards are reformed so they are relevant to the needs of consumers is vital. Connection and repair timeframes, reliability, adequate performance levels and safeguards for vulnerable consumers need to be re-examined and updated. Services should be delivered equitably to all Australians. Any proposed changes to telecommunication services should be conditional on comprehensive

performance and service guarantee replacements that apply to the new services. The Minister of Communications and the Arts should ensure that there are clear standards, benchmarks, accountability and clarity around wholesale (e.g. nbn) and retail provider responsibilities.

Recommendation: *Updated telecommunication service guarantees and adequate performance to reflect the needs of consumers and businesses.*

3 Long term public funding for open access mobile network expansion in rural and regional Australia.

Expansion of mobile coverage is critical

in regional and rural areas. Current and previous programs have resulted in further coverage. However, there remain premises, vital community areas and high traffic areas that are at risk from having no mobile coverage. Continuation of publically funded mobile network expansion, through the Mobile Black Spot Program or similar, on the condition that the technology can be used by all network providers, needs to be guaranteed and funding committed. As expansion is required into more remote areas, the funding and conditions needed to meet community needs will require increased flexibility from the program.

Recommendation: *An ongoing minimum commitment to spend \$60m each year*

on the Mobile Black Spot Program, or an equivalent program, which prioritises community identified areas and open access facilities. The program should have more flexible terms and conditions to address areas where co-investment is not achievable.

4 Fair and equitable access to Sky Muster satellite services for those with a genuine need for the service, and access which reflects the residential, educational and business needs of rural and regional Australia.

Consumers using Sky Muster satellite services are most likely to have no other reliable broadband communication

options. Furthermore, for many of these consumers there are a number of additional needs, such as running multiple businesses from their premises, educating children, and housing a number of employees. It is therefore vital that the limited recourse meets the needs of consumers. The sustainability of these services needs to be ensured into the future. Heavily utilised beam areas require the use of alternative technologies to ensure the capacity is not over used.

Recommendation: *Committed roadmap of how Sky Muster capacity will evolve to allow for increased data. Additional and alternative technologies are needed to ensure services continue to meet consumer and business needs.*

5 Fully resourced capacity building programs that build digital ability, and provide learning and effective problem solving support for regional, rural and remote businesses and consumers.

All of society and the Australian economy stands to gain from the benefits of having regional, rural and remote areas connected - from productivity efficiencies in farming processes and the knock on increases in food quality and reduced prices, to reduced call on Government health and social welfare, to greater social cohesion and integrated communities. In order to realise these benefits consumers and businesses need technical digital support in the transition, and education on advanced technological processes that will deliver them. The minor cost in building the capacity now is minimal in terms of the longer term benefit that will be realised.

Recommendation: *Minimum of \$5m per annum funding to a grants program for independent digital technical support and capacity building in rural and remote areas.*

Having a say on the USO

The first of many issues in 2017 to be a focus for the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition was the Productivity Commission's Draft Report for the Inquiry into the Universal Service Obligation (USO).

The USO underpins consumers' access to phone services, including payphones. While many may have never heard about the USO, it is an important obligation that aims to ensure voice services are available and accessible to all Australians.

As part of the Inquiry, the Productivity Commission is examining the possibility of changing how voice services are delivered, and looking at whether the NBN network is the best platform in all areas.

In late January/early February, Coalition members, including the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), the Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), NSW Farmers, ACCAN, Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia (BIRRR), Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) and AgForce Queensland appeared before the Commission at hearings around Australia. The organisations voiced concerns about the future of the USO and in particular, how voice services will be delivered if the USO is changed.

The turnout of Coalition member organisations meant that a range of rural and regional consumer groups, who experience issues with their telecommunications services, were represented.



“The USO underpins consumers' access to phone services, including payphones”

The issues

Judy Sinclair-Newton, immediate past president of the ICPA, raised issues about distance education and how families struggle to educate their children with unreliable internet and phone services.

“I guess a lot of our families are living in remote areas of Australia, often doing distance education with their children, which relies heavily on communications, mostly through internet,” noted Mrs Sinclair-Newton. “Then we also have a lot of the small rural schools as well, and a lot of them also have a lot of issues with no mobile coverage, poor internet services and that sort of thing.”

At a public hearing in Dubbo, NSW, CWA of NSW President, Annette Turner, highlighted the importance of landline phones in areas where mobile coverage is patchy.

“Although not USO-related, mobile outages are extremely common, and when they do work we have extremely low speeds, and no clear commitment to infrastructure upgrades,” said Mrs Turner. “This needs to be taken into account when considering the USO, as often the landline is the only way to communicate. Some families report poor connectivity with emergency services, which can have significant consequences.”

“When considering if the NBN could play a role in providing a minimum baseline broadband and voice service, the issues of reliability need to be fully considered. In the view of the Association, the NBN is not a sufficiently reliable platform to deliver USO service. We do not consider that Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) is an acceptable replacement for a fixed line.”

NFF Manager of Rural Affairs, Mark Harvey-Sutton, outlined why farmers need reliable phone and internet services.

“The NFF believes that connectivity represents the next frontier for agricultural productivity in Australia,” said Mr Harvey-

Sutton. “Telecommunications services have evolved to the extent that it is now reasonable for baseline broadband to be considered a right for all users. Regional, rural and remote consumers and businesses need rights to access broadband and voice services, and we urge the Commission to be conscientious and practical in considering a path forward.”

NSW Farmers President, Derek Schoen, spoke about how important telecommunications services are for all rural and regional consumers.

“This inquiry goes to the very heart of what underpins access to effective telecommunications for regional and rural and remote Australians,” said Mr Schoen. “The current Universal Service Obligation and its associated consumer safeguards have been important in delivering everyone in Australia access to voice services. However, this is the 21st Century. Voice service is no longer enough if you want to run a business, educate your children, interact with government agencies, access healthcare, or even just communicate with your friends and family.”

At the public hearing in Sydney, ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin, summarised concerns around changing the USO from an obligation to a policy objective.

“Communications services are undoubtedly essential. ACCAN is concerned that ensuring access to communications service through a policy objective rather than an explicit obligation such as the Universal Service Obligation may result in a moveable goal,” said Ms Corbin. “Varying levels of commitment and funding, depending on the political outlook of the day and the body responsible for delivering the specific elements, may well undermine or affect it in some detrimental way.”

The Coalition looks forward to the next stage of the Inquiry when the Productivity Commission will present a report to the Federal Government. A response from the Government is expected later in 2017.

What's on the agenda for 2017?

Already 2017 has started off as a big year for ACCAN. In a short time, we have completed significant submissions to the Productivity Commission on the Universal Service Obligation and to the Department of Communications and the Arts Telecommunications Reform Package. In the year ahead we'll be working on a range of reviews and consultations, representing the consumer view in discussions with industry and Government. Here's a snapshot of what we'll be working on this year.

Domestic Mobile Roaming

Late last year ACCAN submitted to the ACCC's Inquiry into Domestic Mobile Roaming. The purpose of the Inquiry was to determine whether the difference in geographic coverage provided by Telstra, Optus and Vodafone is having a negative effect on competition for mobile services, and whether requiring mobile roaming would be in the long-term interests of consumers. We expect a draft decision from the ACCC on this issue in the first half of 2017.

ACCAN did not support mobile roaming in the Inquiry as it may not benefit consumers overall. We argued that other options should be examined that may support competition, while encouraging investment in mobile networks. These could include open-access roaming and stronger co-location requirements, continued monitoring of issues affecting mobile coverage by the ACCC and more transparency in advertising about coverage provided by Mobile Virtual Network Operators.

We will consult with our membership when forming our comments on the ACCC's draft decision later this year.

Consumer safeguards review

This year the Department of Communications and the Arts will conduct a review of consumer

safeguards. The review will look at the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG).

The current CSG only applies to connection and fault repair times on fixed-line telephone (i.e. voice) services. This leaves consumers with no guarantees for fixed broadband (i.e. data) services.

ACCAN has been calling for an updated CSG to include service timeframes for fault rectification, connections and appointment keeping as the standard for internet connections. We are also proposing independent service reliability benchmarking to ensure that disruptions to services are minimised.

In this review we will engage closely with our membership, the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition and the Department to highlight what a future CSG must include.

TCP Code review

We anticipate that the review of the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code will take place in the second half of 2017. The TCP Code provides significant consumer

protections and ACCAN believes the Code has been an effective tool in driving good industry practice.

The Code was designed to address ballooning consumer dissatisfaction with the telco industry. Since its introduction, we have seen complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman consistently decrease each year.

ACCAN is keen to engage with the review to ensure that the important consumer protections put in place by the TCP Code are maintained.

ACCC Telecommunications Market Study

Last year ACCAN submitted to the ACCC Telecommunications Market Study which looked at the likely developments over the next five years. It asked a range of questions about the market to understand if there are any potential issues that will negatively affect consumers.

ACCAN expects a draft report will be published in 2017. We look forward to further engaging with the ACCC in this study to highlight potential consumer issues.



Indigenous consumer education

Last year Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media (QRAM), in conjunction with ACCAN, released what is believed to be the first consumer resources produced in Indigenous languages.

Working with design agency, Gilimbaa, QRAM created a series of audio tracks with information on what you should think about before buying a mobile phone, how to keep internet and phone costs low, what people can do if they get a large or unexpected bill and more. The project also produced a series of colourful posters that cover the same issues.

The materials were produced in the following Indigenous languages: Arrernte, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara, Torres Strait Island Creole and Warlpiri and are also available in English.

The audio tracks were well received by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio stations, communities and organisations.

"This was a highly rewarding and important project for QRAM to be involved in, both from a content production and research point of view," said QRAM Manager, Gerry Pyne.

"We've had some really positive feedback on the audio and printed resources we produced, especially the content that was translated into community languages.

"This content has been used by a large number of remote broadcasters, providing important information on telecommunications rights to community members through local and trusted sources.

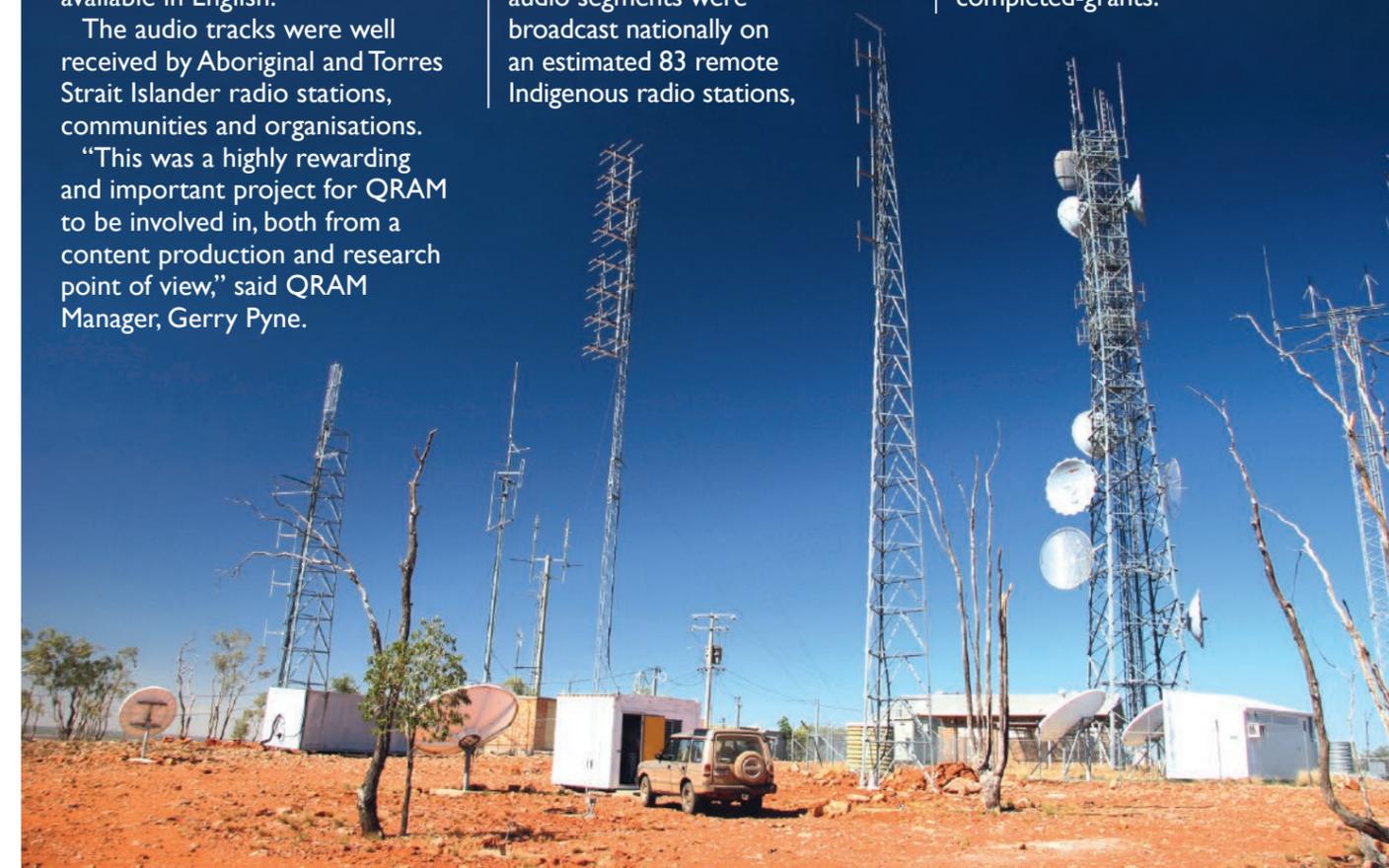
"We've also had lots of positive feedback from community organisations and councils who are using the content to give community members a better understanding of the simple things they can do if they have a problem with their phone or internet service, their bills, or the plan they've purchased or signed up for."

The English versions of the four audio segments were broadcast nationally on an estimated 83 remote Indigenous radio stations,

reaching a large and diverse national audience. Translated versions of the audio segments were broadcast across an estimated 51 remote Indigenous communities where these languages are spoken regularly. Next time you're in northern Australia tune in and you might hear an ACCAN message!

QRAM believes they have resulted in a greater understanding of the problems faced by remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in terms of accessing reliable telecommunications and internet services, problems with affordability and problems interacting with service providers.

To access the materials produced in the project go to the ACCAN website: accan.org.au/grants/completed-grants.





Reliable telecommunications a necessity for Aussie cotton farmers

“
Digital
technology is
said to be behind
the next big
agricultural
revolution
”

probes, the highest rate among all Australian agricultural industries,” said Mr Murray. “Farm machinery, such as tractors, come standard with in-built computers. Drones are common place and ‘smart’ irrigation systems are being trialled across the industry.”

In addition to ag-tech applications, cotton growers are also running businesses and commonly require access to accounting software and management software, which is often data heavy and cloud based.

“While this new digital era offers exciting opportunities for our members, those without access to reliable telecommunications services are unable to fully engage in this revolution. As technology and services in metropolitan areas are constantly improving, many of our members struggle to get a reliable mobile signal and don’t have access to a reliable internet source capable of meeting the needs of their businesses,” added Mr Murray.

Alongside the direct impact on business, the organisation also points out how poor telecommunications services can affect farmers’ ability to attract and recruit staff, access online training and education, and potentially create safety issues on farms.

“Cotton Australia joined the Coalition because our growers, alongside so many other regional, rural or remote residents, are limited by poor connectivity,” said Mr Murray. “The Australian cotton industry competes in a global market. Our farmers need access to adequate telecommunications services to maximise the potential benefits offered by digital agriculture and remain competitive in a global market.”

The cotton industry is an integral part of the Australian economy, worth more than \$1.5 billion in export earnings for the 2015-16 season and employing on average 10,000 people.

Cotton Australia, the peak industry body for Australia’s cotton industry, is one of ACCAN’s newest members. The organisation is also a member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition.

As a member of both ACCAN and the Coalition, Cotton Australia has highlighted telecommunications issues many cotton growers experience,

including poor to no mobile service, unreliable internet services with speeds and data caps that often mean growers struggle to send an email, let alone capitalise on all the benefits of ‘smart’ agriculture.

This lack of reliable connections means that some growers are unable to take advantage of new and innovative digital technologies that would make their jobs easier and more efficient.

We spoke to Cotton Australia General Manager, Michael Murray, to find out more about the telecommunications issues cotton growers face and what improved services would mean for them.

Fit-for-purpose telecommunications

The modern cotton industry emerged in Australia in the 1960s, and has evolved into the world’s leading cotton industry – by yield, quality and water efficiency.

According to Cotton Australia, the industry’s success is driven by a culture of innovation partnered with access to research, development and extension, as well as a commitment to a best management practices program which fosters a spirit of continuous improvement.

On-farm technology with ‘smart’ farming applications is developing

rapidly. Because of this, Cotton Australia points out that technology and reliable telecommunications services are no longer a luxury, but a necessity to conduct a modern day business able to compete in the global market, as Australian cotton growers continue to do with more than 99 per cent of the crop exported each season.

“Digital technology is said to be behind the next big agricultural revolution, with digital innovation potentially contributing a 25-30 per cent change in business metrics in the future,” said Mr Murray. “Access to reliable and fit-for-purpose telecommunications services is

essential for anyone living and running businesses in rural Australia.

“Only if this is delivered can cotton growers take full advantage of the huge benefits of the digital revolution – the possibilities would be endless.”

IoT and other applications

Cotton growers (and many other Australian farmers) already heavily rely on internet of things (IoT) devices and high-tech applications in the day to day running of their businesses. Unreliable telecommunications can be a hindrance to using these devices.

“Seventy per cent of Australian cotton growers use soil moisture