

## Media release

**For immediate release Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010**

### **ACCAN welcomes improved media access for people with disability**

Peak communications consumer body ACCAN has welcomed the Government's move to greatly improve media access for people who are Deaf, blind, or who have vision or hearing impairments by improving television captioning and trialling an audio description television broadcast service.

Reforms long fought for by disability advocates will now become law, including the requirement that TV captioning be of adequate quality and that the regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), have improved powers to investigate complaints about captioning quality.

ACCAN congratulates the Government on its commitment to mandate that prime TV programs be captioned from 6am to midnight on the main free-to-air and pay television channels.

"More captions of a higher quality will improve the quality of life of millions of Australians with hearing impairments," said ACCAN Director of Policy & Campaigns Elissa Freeman.

"However, it is disappointing that the new digital multi-channels haven't been included in the expanded captioning requirements. Digital TV is supposed to be bringing better TV services to all Australians, not just those who can hear."

ACCAN also welcomes the announcement of a trial of audio description on the ABC in the second half of 2011, which will provide a voice description of the visual broadcast for people who are blind or vision impaired.

"We congratulate the alliance of consumer groups including Media Access Australia, Deaf Australia, Deafness Forum, Vision Australia and Blind Citizens Australia which has campaigned long and hard on these issues and successfully made the case that media accessibility issues are crucial quality of life factors for millions of Australians," said Ms Freeman.

"We hope that our national broadcaster, the ABC, is able to meet the government's commitment of an audio description trial in the second half of 2011. Blind and vision-impaired Australians have been waiting a long time for this."

The report also recommends that the broadcasting industry should partner with disability representative groups through ACCAN to improve online accessibility. ACCAN says it looks forward to working with industry and disability groups to deliver a more accessible online world.

**Media contact:** Elise Davidson 0409 966 931 [edavidson@accan.org.au](mailto:edavidson@accan.org.au)

---

#### **About ACCAN**

ACCAN (Australian Communications Consumer Action Network) is Australia's new peak communications consumer organisation. ACCAN's goal is available, accessible and affordable communications that enhance the lives of consumers. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Australian government.