

Media release

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Regulator commits to important 13/1800 number reform for mobile phones

ACCAN says today marks a major step forward in important reforms to make calls from mobile phones to 1800/13 numbers free or the cost of a local call, as they currently are from landlines.

The Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA) has today committed to amend the relevant legislation following further consultation and have industry implement the changes by January 2015.

This commitment comes following the 18-month Fair Calls For All "Number Woman" campaign by ACCAN, ACOSS and Financial Counselling Australia to address the high cost of calling 1800/13 numbers from mobiles, which are often made to essential services and businesses.

"This announcement by the ACMA today marks a victory for our members and those in the wider community sector who came to us with concerns about the impact the high cost of calls to 1800/13 numbers was having on the community," said ACCAN Director of Policy & Campaigns Elissa Freeman.

In 2011 ACCAN assembled a coalition of over 70 organisations who worked together to lobby telecommunication companies, government and the regulator to look at this issue.

ACCAN says there were over 1000 submissions in response to a consultative paper the ACMA issued in October last year, highlighting the widespread community support for these changes.

"We congratulate the ACMA for addressing this important issue and taking the necessary steps to ensure telecommunications regulation keeps pace with changing face of communications in this country, and for responding to widespread community concerns on the issue."

"Due to the complex nature of numbering arrangements, these reforms will take time. But what's important is that we have this commitment so we can work together with the ACMA and industry to make them happen."

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Background

ACMA update: <http://engage.acma.gov.au/update-mobile-calls-to-freephone-and-local-rate-numbers/>

ACCAN Fair Calls campaign: www.accan.org.au/numberwoman

View this media release online: www.accan.org.au

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About ACCAN

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