

Big consumer wins in Telco Reform Package legislation

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) welcomes changes to the [Telecommunications Reform Package](#) legislation introduced into Parliament today as a big win for all consumers. A number of ACCAN's concerns will be addressed by the legislation as it contains improved consumer protections.

In particular, ACCAN is pleased to see these changes:

- Statutory Infrastructure Provider provisions will now ensure that all premises can access a network capable of delivering peak retail plans of 25Mbps download speed and 5Mbps upload speeds.
- That no areas will be exempt from the provision.
- Voice capability will be ensured over fixed line and fixed wireless areas.

The Regional Broadband Scheme, which is also included in the legislation, will ensure regional services are funded sustainably and transparently. There are economic and societal benefits in having everyone connected, therefore ensuring that broadband services are funded sustainably into the future is vital.

"The legislation includes big wins for all consumers, especially for regional, rural and remote consumers," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "Broadband services are essential for consumers, yet currently, there is no requirement on nbn to connect and provide ongoing services to all premises. We are pleased that consumers can now be reassured that under the proposed legislation all premises must be able to access a broadband network capable of a minimum peak speed of 25Mbps download and 5Mbps upload."

The draft legislation released last December did not ensure peak speeds to consumers served by nbn satellite and fixed wireless. This was not equitable for regional consumers. We are glad to see that all consumers, no matter where they live, are protected in this legislation. ACCAN will be encouraging the Minister to use the new powers proposed in the legislation to set service standards if the bill is passed.

The measures introduced in the legislation are the first step toward ensuring adequate consumer protections can be put in place for future broadband and phone services. We must also ensure that public phones will be provided where they are needed and consumers relying on satellite services have access to reliable telephone and broadband services.

“We’re looking forward to further discussions with Government and industry on the upcoming Consumer Safeguards Review and the Government response to the Productivity Commission report on the Universal Service Obligation,” added Ms Corbin.

For more information, contact Luke Sutton on luke.sutton@accan.org.au or 0409 966 931. For the latest updates, follow ACCAN on [Twitter](#) or like us on [Facebook](#).

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