



Media Release

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Telstra customers at reduced risk of unexpected third party charges

ACCAN welcomes Telstra's announcement that it will [no longer offer third party mobile subscriptions](#) to its customers from 3 December, 2017. Our recent survey found that as many as [1.9m consumers](#) across Australia have found unexpected third party charges on their phone bills in the previous six months.

"We congratulate Telstra on stepping up and taking action to stop their customers from getting slugged by unwanted third party subscriptions," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "Consumers have had to put up with these unexpected charges far too long."

While this is a welcome move, ACCAN is calling for [stricter regulation on third party billing](#) because so many consumers are getting caught out (see below for additional safeguards we are calling for).

Third party subscription services are still offered by Optus. Telstra and Vodafone customers could still get stung by one-off third party charges. This is concerning as many consumers are unaware that their mobile accounts can be used in this way.

"Our survey found that there is a significant lack of awareness amongst consumers with just under 50 per cent of respondents being aware that they could have third party services charged to their phone bills," added Ms Corbin. "The way the system is set up, consumers have to opt-out of these services otherwise their phone is like an unsecured credit card and people have no idea what they're being charged for."

"Consumers should remain vigilant and look out for any unexpected text messages they receive about third party services. They should reply STOP to any text messages they are unsure about and regularly check their bills for any unexpected charges."

ACCAN is calling for additional consumer safeguards including:

- Compliance monitoring of third party charged services, with published reporting to the regulator
- Broadening the existing code to cover all third party billing services
- Setting spending caps for post-paid and pre-paid mobile services to zero
- Introducing an overall opt-in arrangement for all third party billed services, so that the facility needs to be activated on request of the account holder, instead of the current opt-out default

What can consumers do?

- If you find third party charges on your phone bill make a complaint to the third party company. If you can't contact the company, take your complaint to your telco. Ask your telco to bar these services on your account. If your complaint is not resolved with your telco, take your complaint to [the TIO](#).
- Share your experiences with third party charges with ACCAN on [Facebook](#) or in the comments section on our [blog post](#).
- [Contact the ACMA](#) to express your concerns about third party charges and the need for better consumer protections. The ACMA has information on its website about [unexpected third party charges](#).

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](#).