

## **ACCAN media release**

**Media release date: 5 November 2009**

*“ACCAN announces new Board”*

ACCAN today welcomed five new members to its Board. Professor Michael Fraser, Dr Ross Kelso, Ms Heron Loban, Ms Kate Locke and Ms Su Robertson were elected at ACCAN's Annual General Meeting yesterday.

“I am confident the new members of the Board will provide insightful direction and effective strategic guidance and stewardship in steering the organisation in its role of strong advocate for communications consumers,” Allan Asher, CEO of ACCAN said.

“I look forward to working with the new Board in setting priorities for dynamic and responsive policies for meeting the challenges of a changing communications landscape,” he said.

Professor Fraser, Dr Kelso, Ms Loban, Ms Locke and Ms Robertson bring a depth and breadth of experience in the areas of communications law, indigenous consumer affairs, communications regulation, research and policy and disability issues.

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy also welcomed the new appointments and commended outgoing Board members for their role establishing Australia's peak communications consumer body.

“ACCAN has rapidly established itself as the unified voice for consumers in the communications sector and ensuring issues of community concern are given the attention and profile they deserve,” Senator Conroy said.

“Congratulations to outgoing ACCAN Board members for their efforts establishing the foundation for this important organisation. I am sure, with the new Board members in place, ACCAN will continue to build its leadership in the sector and raise the voice of communications consumers,” he said.

The elected members join existing members Len Bytheway, Nan Bosler, Sue Salthouse and Kyle Miers on ACCAN's Board.

Mr Asher paid tribute to outgoing Board members; Alex Varley, Holy Raiche, Aaron Davis, Gerard Goggin and Catriona Lowe for their contribution to the organisation.

“I commend their great efforts in the creation and establishment phase of ACCAN. They have done a tremendous job in leading the organisation through an era of transition and development,” Mr Asher said.

### **About ACCAN**

ACCAN (Australian Communications Consumer Action Network) is Australia's new communications consumer watchdog. ACCAN's purpose is to improve consumer advocacy, undertake research and analysis from a consumer perspective and make the market work for communications consumers. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Australian government.

“The organisation has benefitted greatly from their valuable skills and experience and the generous contribution of their time and commitment. I wish them well in their future endeavours,” he said.

Biographies of ACCAN’s new board members and outgoing members are below.

### **ACCAN new board members**

#### **Professor Michael Fraser**

Michael Fraser is a Professor of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney and Director of the Communications Law Centre, UTS (CLC). The CLC has been recognised for over 20 years as a not for profit, independent voice in the field of communications and the media, which has had a long association with Consumers’ Telecommunications Network. Michael was a founder and CEO of the Copyright Agency, a not for profit company, for 21 years. He has been a director, office bearer and chair on the boards of numerous companies, non government organisations and industry associations in Australia, the UK, USA, Hong Kong, and Europe. He has an unrestricted practising certificate and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

#### **Dr Ross Kelso**

Ross has worked as a researcher into the social and economic aspects of information and communications technology, including the application of technology assisting the deaf community through the Deaf Australia Online project. Ross was a member of the Consumers’ Telecommunications Network for the last 15 years and served on its board for the last 5 years, most recently as chair. Dr Kelso is also a member of the Communications and Media Law Association, the Australian Computer Society Telecommunications Group and serves on the board of the Internet Society of Australia. Dr Kelso recently completed doctoral studies examining open access to next generation broadband.

#### **Ms Heron Loban**

Ms Loban is the Chair of the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, an organisation that provides consumer education, advocacy and financial counselling assistance to Indigenous consumers across Australia. Ms Loban is also a Law Lecturer at James Cook University. She is currently leading a research project investigating the influences on the decision making of Indigenous consumers. Prior to taking up her position at James Cook University, Ms Loban worked on Thursday Island in both the government and community sectors, including positions as a Solicitor at the Torres Strait Northern Peninsula Legal Service and as a Project Officer conducting research into law and justice service delivery issues in the Torres Strait region.

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### **Ms Kate Locke**

Kate is a trained journalist specialising in online and broadcast news. She has worked in the online media industry for the past eight years and is currently the Online Content Manager for Zurich Financial Services. She is also a lobbyist with a special interest in the deaf community and ensuring people with disabilities have the same access and opportunities to utilise telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services as other people.

### **Ms Su Robertson**

Su is a lecturer at the Victoria University School of Law and an Australian Legal Practitioner. She has more than 10 years experience in the legal industry, working in several positions including Principal Solicitor and Judge's Associate in the Victorian legal system. Su has managed community-based organisations, including the Communications Law Centre and conducted research on the challenges of communications regulation. Su was a member of the Consumer Representation Working Group that created ACCAN and its constitution.

## **ACCAN outgoing Board members**

Alex Varley, former Chair

Alex contributed his depth of knowledge in disability access issues and extensive experience in the management of not-for-profit organisations, including senior roles at Sydney Theatre Company, Australian National Maritime Museum and Australian Caption Centre. He is also director of the Australian Social Innovation Exchange, a not-for-profit organisation that develops and encourages innovative solutions to social issues and the Chief Executive Officer of Media Access Australia.

Holly Raiche, former Deputy Chair

Executive Director, Internet Society of Australia, Director of Consumer Telecommunications Network. Holly brought to the role, strong policy development and governance skills including extensive experience in policy advocacy in privacy, emerging technology and small business issues. Holly was a member of the ACCAN working group.

Aaron Davis

Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network. Aaron brought to the Board his extensive experience in Indigenous consumer affairs, community council operation, financial counselling and strategic planning and his knowledge of mass media and online communication.

Gerard Goggin

Professor of Digital Communication, and Deputy Director Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales. With an extensive background in academic and consumer representation and research across communication issues, Gerard contributed to the Board his

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expertise in communications, media and governance and his experience in communications law and not-for-profit organisations.

**Catriona Lowe**

Co-Chief Executive Officer, Consumer Action Law Centre and Chair of Consumers Federation of Australia. Catriona brought to the Board strong skills in governance, policy advocacy and telecommunication consumer advocacy as well as experience in not-for-profit company establishment and mergers experience including human resources, branding and strategic planning. Catriona was a member of the ACCAN working group.

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