# Update on audio description

Amending the Broadcasting Services Act to introduce audio description on free-to-air TV is one of ACCAN’s 2016 communications consumer priorities. Introducing audio description on Australian TV would provide greater access for consumers who are blind or vision impaired. Currently there is no audio description on Australian free-to-air TV.

Audio description is additional verbal narration that describes visual elements shown on screen during pauses in dialogue. It can describe elements such as scenes, costumes and actions.

Since April last year, the ABC has been running an audio description trial on its iView online catch-up service. The trial was set to run for 15 months and will be finishing shortly. In a recent development, The Greens party has called for [audio description to be made permanent](http://greens.org.au/initiatives/wa/audio-description) on ABC iView. This is a positive step in increasing access to content and information for people who are blind or vision-impaired.

The iView trial has been of benefit to many consumers who are blind or vision impaired. ACCAN welcomes the Greens party support for audio description on iView and their commitment to develop an action plan to introduce audio description more broadly.

While audio description on online catch-up services and streaming services (such as [Netflix](http://dralegal.org/featured/netflix-enhance-access-customers-blind/?utm_source=newsletter_41&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=webnews329)) is a positive step for consumers, an internet connection is required to access these. Not all consumers have access to the internet. Because of this, ACCAN maintains that audio description should be available on free-to-air TV so that the maximum number of consumers who are blind or vision impaired can access the service.

ACCAN’s [Accessible programming on TV](http://accan.org.au/election-2016/election-issues/1233-accessible-programming-on-tv) policy position also calls for amendments to be made to the Broadcasting Services Act to expand the current ‘primary channel’ captioning quotas to cover all free-to-air channels. Improved accessible programming on free-to-air TV will mean equal access to entertainment content and information for consumers with a disability.

ACCAN has been calling for more accessible programming for some time now. In May, following the announcement of the Federal Budget, ACCAN called for the free-to-air networks to [fund more accessible programming on TV](http://accan.org.au/our-work/1218-free-to-air-accessibility-release) after their broadcast licence fees were reduced by 25 per cent.