

ACCAN Priority Assistance

27 August 2021

ACCAN has today released our Priority Assistance Position statement.

Designed in consultation with consumers and other stakeholders, the Priority Assistance Position outlines consumer expectations for a new, whole of industry approach in the provision of Priority Assistance services. This new approach would see Priority Assistance services which offer consumer choice, provide robust service continuity requirements, reliable interim, or back-up services and expanded eligibility with streamlined approval procedures.

Reliable telecommunications and service continuity are important for all consumers, however, for those consumers with a life-threatening illness, reliable connectivity is critical. Consumer expectations today have advanced with the ubiquity of broadband technology. Telstra's Priority Assistance policy and the industry Code C609 (2007), were developed in a very different telecommunications landscape.

In 2018, as part of the Government's Consumer Safeguards consultation, the Government proposed that all providers must offer and put in place arrangements to provide or arrange a backup or alternative service for consumers with a diagnosed life-threatening medical condition when signing them up. One of the recommendations from this consultation called for the Government to consult with consumer groups and industry to establish a more suitable model with shared responsibility across industry.

ACCAN supported this proposal and has developed this community position on Priority Assistance in preparation for further consultation with Government and industry.