

ACCAN awards seven new telecommunications grants

Australia's peak communications consumer advocacy group, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), has today announced the seven successful projects that it will fund through the 2019 Round of the ACCAN Grants Program.

The ACCAN Grants Program funds projects to undertake research on telecommunications issues, represent telecommunications consumers, and create educational tools which empower consumers to understand telecommunications products and services and make decisions in their own interests.

The operation of ACCAN's Grant Program is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997.

A record 62 applicants from a variety of university, research, and community organisations applied for funding under the latest round of ACCAN's Grants Program.

ACCAN CEO Teresa Corbin said that the organisation was very pleased to work with the successful applicants over the course of their projects.

"Our grants projects help us to greater understand a wide range of telco issues facing consumers, from access to communications in regional and remote areas, to emerging technologies. It also helps to get information out to consumers about these issues." she said.

"We look forward to working with our latest successful applicants as they undertake these exciting projects."

Further information on the successful applicants can be found at accan.org.au/grants/current-grants

2019 Grants Projects

Monash University

Unregulated and segmented dark ads on social media: consumer education and regulatory options

This project will produce privacy recommendations and a consumer education resource to assist consumers' awareness and understanding of dark ads. Dark ads are advertisements that enable algorithmic segmentation/isolation of social media users.

WESNET (Women's Services Network) Incorporated

Staying Safe: empowering women to navigate privacy, safety and security mobile apps in the Australian marketplace

Will analyse apps targeted at women at risk of domestic violence, and which are marketed as assisting women to stay safe. Many of these apps have serious security and privacy flaws themselves, unwittingly putting women at greater risk. The project will publish independent reviews and advice to assist consumers to make informed decisions relevant to their needs.

First Nations Media Australia

Indigenous communities' experiences and perspectives of digital inclusion

This project will use a storytelling and case study approach to capture the digital inclusion experiences and perspectives of residents in 2 remote communities in the NT. The aim is to understand digital exclusion, social inequality and digital futures as identified by Indigenous peoples.

Deakin University

Regulating the Internet of Things to protect consumer privacy

This project aims to develop an Australian privacy ratings system, a set of best practice principles for regulating domestic smart goods and educational resources to promote consumer awareness about privacy and the Internet of Things.

SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Service)

Telecommunications and the working poor

Will identify telecommunications usage, affordability and hardship experiences of the 'working poor' (below poverty line; main source of income from employment) and low-income consumers. These groups are less likely to seek, and often do not qualify for, government assistance. Will identify how these households could be assisted to overcome affordability barriers and improve telecoms access.

MoneyMob Talkabout

Telecommunications debt in rural and remote Indigenous Central Australian communities

Aims to establish extent of Indigenous telecommunications debt in regional Central Australia and surrounding remote communities, and examine how sales practices may drive this problem. Results will inform continued advocacy with industry and regulators.

WEstjustice

Newly-arrived consumers telecommunications advocacy project

Will explore low agency and poor outcomes for consumers newly-arrived to Australia. The project will use an integrated advocacy model to explore and analyse systemic issues while simultaneously providing a specialized legal casework service focusing on telecommunications issues. Findings will inform evidence-based recommendations for reform to both regulators and industry.