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Media Release

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New research finds telco sign-on pressure, plan changes, low trust, poor coverage: ACCAN calls for urgent action.

Preliminary research commissioned by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) raises alarm bells for policymakers and regulators. Findings point to widespread consumer harm and deep mistrust in the telecommunications industry.

The polling, conducted as part of the first tranche of ACCAN's consumer sentiment research, highlights troubling experiences of telco behaviour and unmet expectations.

"Given the poor treatment many consumers have experienced at the hands of their telco, it is no surprise that trust is in the doldrums," said ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett.

Among the early findings:

- 41% of consumers report having limited faith in their telco to act in their best interest
- 24% (1 in 4) say they felt pressured into signing up for a more expensive plan than they wanted
- 32% (1 in 3) received different coverage than they were led to expect by their telco
- 39% experienced unexpected changes to their contract*

"This research shows yet again that deceptive sales, misleading conduct, and poor customer outcomes are not the exceptions—they're the shared experience of far too many Australians," Ms Bennett said.

The preliminary figures support long-standing concerns from consumer advocates, community sector and the ACCC that telco sales practices often exploit consumer vulnerability and confusion, particularly around plan complexity and coverage.

"These issues are not just frustrating—they can be financially and emotionally harmful," Ms Bennett added. "They also speak to a bigger problem: a lack of accountability in a sector that has outgrown the outdated self-regulatory framework."

This latest insight builds on ACCAN's recent campaign efforts, including the [Fair Call Campaign](#), which brings together 23 consumer organisations calling for stronger, enforceable rules in the telco sector. ACCAN has also [welcomed the Enhancing Consumer Safeguards Bill](#), currently progressing through

Parliament, as a long-overdue step toward real consequences for telcos that mislead or mistreat customers.

“Trust in the Telco industry is fractured. That trust will not be rebuilt through voluntary codes and industry-written rules. We need binding obligations, meaningful penalties, and a consumer-first approach to regulation,” Ms Bennett said.

ACCAN urges the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Federal Government to prioritise consumer interests and a reduction in harm as the key touchstones in their decision-making.

“Telecommunications is an essential service. Telcos need to be properly regulated and held accountable for the provision of quality accessible services without exploiting or harming consumers,” Ms Bennett concluded.

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The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak communication consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

ACCAN is committed to reconciliation that acknowledges Australia’s past and values the unique culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. [Read our RAP](#)

**DISCLOSURE: These results were gathered from an online survey conducted by Essential Research on behalf of Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) with sample provided by Qualtrics from online panels. The research was conducted between 4th and 11th March 2025. The target population is all Australian residents aged 18+ who have internet access either in their home, or via a mobile device. Participants were invited to participate and completed the survey online without an interviewer present and incentives are offered for participation. The total sample size is n=1,065. Quotas are applied to be representative of the target population by age, gender and location. RIM and cell weighting is applied to the data using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The factors used in the weighting are age, gender, location. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.*