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## Media Release

**4 June 2025**

### **Telstra emergency service outage 'a near-miss' - with lessons to be learnt**

Peak communications consumer body ACCAN has expressed concern following today's news that Telstra has been fined for failing to maintain access for more than 12 hours to the 106 emergency call service used by Australians with hearing and speech impairments.

This represents a critical failure in Telstra's duty as the nation's designated emergency service call provider and falls well short of the standard the public expects from Australia's largest telecommunications company.

ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett said that the incident must be treated as a warning sign—and a call to action to modernise Australia's emergency call infrastructure.

"People with hearing impairments rely on the 106 service as their lifeline to emergency assistance. When this fails, their safety is at risk," Ms Bennett said.

"We are fortunate that no one was harmed during this outage—but relying on luck is not a public safety strategy. This should be treated as a near-miss and a wake-up call."

"We thank Telstra for committing to an independent review of what went wrong and look forward to hearing how systems and processes will be strengthened to prevent a recurrence."

"This incident underscores the urgent need to modernise Australia's emergency services. Text-to-Triple-Zero is already in place in many countries. Australia must not fall further behind."

"With new technologies such as SMS via low-earth orbit satellite becoming available, the time to implement accessible, resilient emergency communication is now," Ms Bennett said.

ACCAN continues to call on the Federal Government to prioritise investment in a 'Next Generation Triple Zero' system to ensure all Australians—regardless of location or accessibility needs—can reach emergency services reliably, at any time.

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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](#)***

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