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Media Release

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Time to scrap 'consumer protections' rules which do not protect consumers

Australia's peak communications consumer body, ACCAN, has today called for the weak and ineffective industry-drafted Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code to be scrapped in favour of robust and enforceable industry standards that better protect Australian consumers.

Communications are an essential service - yet the rules which exist to protect communications consumers are failing in their sole purpose.

ACCAN is formally joining the Fair Call Coalition* alongside 22 other consumer advocacy bodies to call on the ACMA to refuse to register the Code and instead implement direct regulation of consumer protections in Australia's telco industry.

Consumer representatives, key regulators, and even some telcos agree that the TCP Code is deficient. In a submission to the industry peak body overseeing the final draft of the Code, Communications Alliance, ACCAN identified numerous critical shortcomings which prevent the Code from providing appropriate community safeguards to communications consumers.

ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett said that after years of drafting and consultation, the Code still fails on too many fronts. The only effective path forward is for the ACMA to abandon the Code and introduce stronger, mandatory rules for the sector.

“As the peak telco consumer body, ACCAN has engaged deeply for several years as versions of the TCP Code have been drafted and developed. We have worked hard with industry, consumers, regulators and the government to ensure that rules meet appropriate community safeguards.”

“During this time, there have been countless examples of major telcos failing to prevent irresponsible sales to vulnerable consumers, scams, data breaches and outages. These failures have had exacted serious economic consequences and caused lasting consumer harm,” Ms Bennett said.

“Right now, the fox is guarding the henhouse. No other essential services sector allows this — and telecommunications should be no different. It's time to put consumers first.”

"We thank the Federal Government for its action to-date to move to mandatory, direct regulation to protect consumers facing financial hardship and domestic and family violence. This reflects a rising lack of confidence in the TCP Code."

"We agree with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman and other key stakeholder groups that direct regulation is the only way consumers will see adequate protections."

"We note that the ACMA has previously acknowledged that the TCP Code process is slow, can result in poor drafting and is not necessarily representative of the industry that will be affected by the Code – we couldn't agree more."

"The telco sector is at a crossroads. Consumers deserve strong, enforceable protections—not another failed self-regulation experiment. The ACMA must act now within its powers to reject the registration of this Code which is no longer fit for purpose if we want to ensure a fairer, safer telecommunications industry for all Australians."

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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](#)
