



Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs

September 2010 Meeting Report

The Chair welcomed the Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs (SACCA) to the meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land.

ACMA 'Reconnecting the Customer' Inquiry

The meeting noted that ACCAN's submission to the 'Reconnecting the Customer' inquiry focuses on three areas: consumer experience; systemic failure including the consumer protection framework (including Code and Australian Communications and Media Authority failures; TIO structure) and broad market failures (confusion and misleading conduct); and how to improve consumer outcomes (including new standards, consumer compensation).

Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code review

The meeting then discussed the issue of unequal representation on the working groups of the Telecommunications Consumer Protection (TCP) Code review committees. There are currently three industry members but only one consumer representative in each Working Group. It was suggested that ACCAN should draft a letter to the Steering Committee that would propose equal representation of consumer and industry in working groups.

Opportunities for SACCA to be involved in research projects

SACCA members were then informed about the *Consumers First: Smart Regulation for Digital Australia* project, which will look at the application of principles-based regulation to communications. The meeting then noted the *NBN Handbook* project. This project will translate the technical discussion into questions consumers will ask about the National Broadband Network. Members were then informed about a project ACCAN is developing around consumer decision-making, contracts and mobile phone/broadband advertising.

General ACCAN update

The meeting concluded with a general update of ACCAN's activities. ACCAN informed the meeting that it had lodged a super complaint with the ACMA. This complaint detailed the systemic issue of the cost of free calls from mobile phones. ACCAN has asked the ACMA to investigate the issue and provide a response. The meeting then noted that ACCAN was working with ACMA to pull together a roundtable on youth issues. ACCAN was also planning on future consultations on Indigenous issues including through contact with case workers.

SACCA members then agreed to next meet on 9 November 2010. This would be followed by the ACCAN AGM and Research Forum on 10 November. The Chair thanked SACCA members and then closed the meeting.