5 June 2023

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

Disability Advisory Forum

Meeting Report

10 May 2023, 11:00am – 2:00pm (AEST) by videoconference

PRESENT:	**Dr Scott Hollier**	**Chairperson** (**ACCAN Board Director**)
	Alice Batchelor	Physical Disability Council of NSW
	Andrew Stewart	Hearing Connections
	Ben McAtamney	Deafblind Australia
	Bruce Maguire	Vision Australia
	Corey Crawford	Blind Citizens Australia
	Denise Boyd	STAR Victoria
	Dwayne Cranfield	National Ethnic Disability Alliance
	Greg Ferrington	Disability Rights Centre
	James Newton	Attendee
	Julie Phillips	Communications Rights Australia
	Lauren Henley	Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
	Rebecca Rudd	Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
	Richard Hensley	Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
	Steve Williamson	Deafness Forum of Australia
	Vaughn Bennison	Disability Voices Tasmania

ASSISTIVE SERVICES: Carmel Humbley   Stenocaptioner
                 Bernadette McGoldrick Captioner
                 Fiona Donaldson   Auslan Interpreter
                 Rebecca Cramp   Auslan Interpreter

ACCAN: Andrew Williams   CEO
              Dr Wayne Hawkins   Director of Inclusion
              Elie El-Khoury Antonios Disability Policy Officer
              Richard Van Der Male Digital Assets Manager

APOLOGIES: Jackson Reynolds-Ryan   Blind Citizens Australia

Forum Purpose

The purpose of ACCAN's Disability Advisory Forum (**DAF**), is to bring together disability sector experts to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of the disability community. The forum will assist ACCAN in progressing its inclusive communications priorities.

The following meeting report provides an overview of the main issues raised and discussed. Forum participants are welcome to use this document in reporting back to their organisations. This report will also be sent to invited representatives who were unable to attend.

Topics Discussed

An update on the Ideal Accessible Communications Roadmap.

- Other emerging/ongoing telecommunications accessibility issues.
- Public procurement of accessible Information and Communications Technology (**ICT**).
- The development of a Disability Digital Inclusion Strategy (**DDIS**).
- A proposed bi-monthly sector meeting.

1. Update on the Ideal Accessible Communications Roadmap

ACCAN reported that progress has been made on the Ideal Accessible Communications Roadmap in the following areas:

- ACCAN has received a grant from the Federal Government to continue to run the accessible Telecoms service for the next two years.
- ACCAN has been working with Telstra to expand its Tech Savvy Senior's Module to include information suitable for people with disabilities.
- ACCAN has been working with Belong and TPG Vodaphone to improve their website and app accessibility.
- ACCAN has advocated for the Federal Government to increase the hours allocated for the National Relay Service.
- ACCAN is continuing to advocate its priority assistance policy position.
- A trial of SMS to 000 for the deaf and hearing impaired and speech-impaired communities, will take place in 2025.

- ACCAN is continuing to work with the Federal Government to promote accessibility across broadcasting services, through the inclusion of captions and audio-description.

The key actions from this discussion were:

- For ACCAN to follow up with Procurement Australia about including accessible procurement of ICT as a topic item in their annual conference.
- For ACCAN to contribute to the ACMA's review of the captioning quality standard for television- through a written submission.
- For ACCAN to continue to advocate for mandatory visual, audio and captioned emergency announcements.

2. Other Emerging/Ongoing Telecommunications Accessibility Issues

The key discussion points and action items on telecommunications and accessibility issues were:

- The importance of promoting the cultural and workplace needs of the deafblind community.
- Working with the Federal Government to introduce and implement accessible forms of identity verification suitable for people with disability.

3. Public Procurement of Accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ACCAN presented a 1-page Briefing Note to support the Community Position Paper on the public procurement of accessible ICT. The main points from this presentation were:

- All ICT products and services should comply with the AS EN 301 549:2020 accessibility requirements for ICT products and services standards.
- All levels of government should implement rigorous monitoring and improvement strategies to ensure ongoing compliance with the recognised accessibility standards.
- Federal, state and territory and local governments should adopt here clear and effective policies mandating that all ICT products and services comply with the relevant accessibility standards.

The key action items were:

- The Community Position Briefing Note on public procurement of accessible ICT, should include an annexure of supporting organisations with links to their websites.
- This Briefing Note can serve as an advocacy strategy that organisations can use to promote procurement of accessible ICT.
- ACCAN should be the point of contact for this advocacy strategy.

4. Development of a Disability Digital Inclusion Strategy (DDIS)

ACCAN presented a short brief on the development of a DDIS.

The main points and actions from this presentation were:

- The DDIS needs to ensure the digital inclusion of all Australians with disability.
- The DDIS should consider artificial intelligence and privacy issues.
- The importance of adopting both a social model of disability and a human rights model of disability to underpin the DDIS.
- Considering how barriers to digital inclusion impact on different levels of disability and accessibility requirements/needs.
- ACCAN should produce and distribute the DDIS in plain language to be accessible and understood by all stakeholders, including people with disability, government, and community organisations.

5. Proposed Bi-Monthly sector Meeting

The attendees agreed to a bi-monthly meeting (every two months), to discuss ongoing telecommunications accessibility issues.

Next Meeting

ACCAN CEO, Andrew Williams, thanked the DAF participants and Scott, the chairperson for their time and valuable contributions.

The chairperson closed the meeting at 2:00pm.