




# OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR

**2021-2022  
Annual Report**

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Australian Communications  
Consumer Action Network  
Limited (ACCAN)  
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For the year ended 30 June 2022

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# CONTENTS

<b>WHO WE ARE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAIR REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CEO OVERVIEW</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CONSUMER WINS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CONSUMER AWARENESS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INDEPENDENT GRANTS PROGRAM</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PROGRAM</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ACCESSIBLE TELECOMS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SUBMISSIONS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>ACCAN LIFE MEMBERS</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ACCAN BOARD</b>	<b>30</b>

# WHO WE ARE



## OUR ORGANISATION

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak communications consumer organisation representing individuals, small businesses and not-for-profit groups as consumers of communications products and services. ACCAN focuses on goods and services encompassed by the converged areas of telecommunications, broadcasting, the internet and online services, including both current and emerging technologies.

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.

## OUR VISION

Communications services that are trusted, inclusive, accessible, and available for all.

## OUR MISSION

ACCAN’s mission is to:

- Represent consumers and the public interest, with particular attention to the needs of consumers for whom the market is not working;
- Inspire, inform, enable and equip consumers to act in their own interests; and
- Research emerging consumer communications issues to provide evidence-based policy advice.

## OUR VALUES

As an organisation we will:

- Act with courage
- Operate openly
- Be inclusive
- Build relationships
- Value people

# CHAIR REPORT

**O**n behalf of the ACCAN Board, I am pleased to report on our work for the 2021-22 year. Similar to the previous year, we again faced many challenges with the ongoing impacts of the COVID pandemic, plus a succession of natural disasters and emergencies dominating much of the year. If there was a silver lining to all these challenges, it is that the need for reliable telecommunications for Australian consumers remained at the forefront of awareness. ACCAN's role as the primary voice for communications consumers throughout this period was pivotal in highlighting the criticality of communications services for all Australians.

The year has also been one of significant change and evolution for ACCAN. In October we said farewell to our long-serving Chief Executive Officer, Teresa Corbin. In a career spanning over 13 years with ACCAN, Teresa's achievements are too many to mention in detail, suffice to say that she leaves a legacy as a fierce consumer advocate and we look forward to working closely with her in her new role at Telstra. Change is an essential element of organisational growth, and with Teresa's departure myself and the Board were very pleased that our Deputy Chief Executive, Andrew Williams, kindly agreed to act in the role upon Teresa's departure. Following an extensive executive search process, we were delighted to confirm Andrew as our Chief Executive Officer



**Deirdre O'Donnell:** Chairperson ACCAN Board

at the end of March. Andrew has been with ACCAN for three years, initially as the Director of Operations prior to transitioning to the Deputy CEO role in July 2021. We look forward to working closely with Andrew and the team as ACCAN embarks on the next phase of its journey.

The theme of change extended beyond ACCAN during the period, and in May we welcomed a new Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland. On behalf of the ACCAN Board and staff I wish the Minister every success in the portfolio and look forward to working with her and her team as we address the vital communications issues impacting Australian consumers. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the former Minister, the Hon Paul Fletcher, for his support and ongoing engagement with ACCAN during his tenure.

Despite some challenges in securing sustainable funding, ACCAN's Accessible Telecoms service continued to assist people with disability and other consumers in need of information on accessible telecommunications features and technologies. The combined support of government and industry is key to the

viability of this important service, and we are very appreciative to those organisations who have contributed to its success.

In March this year we were very pleased to have ACCAN's funding Deed with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) extended for a further five years through to May 2027. ACCAN is very appreciative of the support provided by the Department and this extension provides the continuity that's required as we shape the organisation to respond to emerging consumer needs. My thanks also to the ACCAN staff for their unwavering commitment through this period.

The ACCAN Grants Program continues to be highly competitive and has supported many interesting and innovative projects.



Due to the funding transition mentioned above, a limited number of projects were awarded in 2021, with much of the work focusing on completing all outstanding projects by May 30. With the funding extension finalised, we look forward to welcoming a new round of grant projects in 2023. Thank you to the Independent Grants Panellists, Len Bytheway, Fiona Martin, and Will Tibben for their tireless efforts throughout the process.

We had a number of movements on the ACCAN Board this year. Sadly, due to work commitments, Dr Heron Loban didn't stand for re-election at the AGM upon expiration of her three year term. Dr Scott Winch was co-opted to the Board to fill the temporary vacancy. Professor Julian Thomas was re-elected for a second term and Victoria Rubensohn AM returned to the Board. ACCAN's Deputy Chairperson, Chris Dodds, completed his second term this year and retired from the Board at the AGM. He was subsequently co-opted back to the Board at the November meeting. I extend my thanks to all of the ACCAN Board, who volunteer their time freely, and share a deep passion for consumer advocacy.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with them.

The AGM was again held virtually this year, and it was pleasing to recognise Ms Robin Wilkinson's outstanding contribution to consumer advocacy by awarding her life membership of ACCAN.

Due to the COVID pandemic, ACCAN also held its annual conference online this year; a first for the organisation. The one-day event attracted nearly 300 delegates, with the virtual format allowing participants to attend from all over Australia, and even some from overseas. I would like to congratulate everyone involved in the success of this event.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank ACCAN's members for their support of the organisation. The input and guidance provided by our members is invaluable in helping shape our policy and advocacy work, and is greatly appreciated by all.

In closing, I would like to extend my thanks to the ACCAN team for their outstanding contributions throughout the year.

- Deirdre

# CEO OVERVIEW



**Andrew Williams:** Chief Executive Officer

It gives me great pleasure to present ACCAN's 2021-22 Annual Report. Having succeeded ACCAN's long-term CEO, Teresa Corbin, in October, I was privileged to take on the role full-time at the end of March. Before getting into the detail, I would like to offer my thanks to Teresa for her stewardship of ACCAN over the years and it was pleasing to see so many ACCAN supporters attend her virtual farewell in October.

Like most organisations, much of the first part of the year was spent in lockdown conditions due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. Fortunately, the ACCAN team has become well accustomed to remote working so we were able to continue operations with minimal disruption. A particular highlight was the delivery of our annual conference in a virtual format through a purpose built online conference platform. With almost 300 delegates in attendance, it was clear that this format allowed for much greater participation from stakeholders across the country, and even some international delegates, than has otherwise been the case.

During the year, ACCAN's output of work has been extraordinary, with the team providing input to 62 submissions and completing 12 grants projects, while generating well over 500 media mentions. ACCAN has coordinated consumer representation on 33 committees and undertaken wide ranging engagement with industry,

regulatory and government bodies. We value the input and advice of our members and stakeholders, and it is very pleasing to note that we conducted 235 meetings and events with this group throughout the year.


Our research program through the year included an evaluation of support for low income consumers, and also analysis of consumer experiences with digital platforms. The findings of these projects will continue to inform our policy and advocacy work into the future. We also ran a broad nationally representative omnibus survey that tested our policy priorities and provided a valuable insight into several key aspects of our work, including affordability, reliability, free to air TV, public wi-fi and digital platforms.

ACCAN has actively contributed to a wide range of policy discussions throughout the year. While these are too numerous to mention in this report, some highlights include our work on the NBN Co. pricing review, addressing consumer data and privacy issues, and contributing to the triennial Regional Telecommunications Review.

The ever expanding interrelationship between traditional communications and digital platforms has resulted in ACCAN becoming more deeply involved in a range of issues. I am particularly proud of our initiatives to address the consumer impacts of online safety legislation, and our ongoing scam awareness education work in collaboration with industry and regulators.

We were pleased to receive funding via an auDA Foundation grant to develop a suite of consumer education materials to assist small businesses develop a greater understanding of cyber security issues, with particular emphasis on protecting their domain name security.

Our Accessible Telecoms service has continued to provide essential advice and guidance to consumers on telecommunications accessibility issues, amidst a backdrop of funding uncertainty. We greatly appreciate the support provided by industry and Government in keeping this service operational as we work together to develop a sustainable funding model.



Social distancing and ongoing interstate travel restrictions forced most of our events and stakeholder engagements to continue online. The quality of discussions and outcomes was only magnified by the virtual formats allowing input from a more diverse and expanded set of stakeholders.

It was incredible to witness firsthand the development of ideas and collaborations amongst our stakeholders during this time. It was also pleasing to see some face-to-face interactions recommence in the first half of 2022, and be warmly embraced by participants.

Unfortunately, a succession of natural disasters impacted consumers across much of the country during the year. Like the rest of the community, we were saddened to see the impacts of the devastating floods in NSW and Queensland on multiple occasions throughout the period. These events highlight the essential role of telecommunications, and how absolutely necessary it is to have this formally recognised.

One of the privileges in taking over the CEO role has been the opportunity to engage more closely with our members and

stakeholders. On behalf of the ACCAN team I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to you all, as I see our role as being able to represent your collective voice to advocate for better consumer outcomes. Your insight, advice, and guidance is invaluable and I look forward to meeting more of you in person in the near future, travel restrictions permitting!

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the ACCAN staff. Your unwavering commitment to improving communications services for consumers shines through every day. For such a relatively small team, your output is exceptional, as indicated by the volume of work, but it is also the quality of the product that sets ACCAN apart. Amid what has been a challenging and disrupted year, your professionalism and dedication is both inspiring and appreciated.

- Andrew



# CONSUMER WINS

ACCAN's advocacy has contributed to a number of consumer wins during the 2021-22 financial year.

- After ACCAN had repeatedly raised the difficulties consumers experience in attempting to contact Belong, including frustration at their lack of phone customer service, Belong have recently relaunched a 1300 number to improve its contact with customers.
- The ACCC issued new guidance to creditors and debt collectors addressing issues raised by ACCAN, including properly managing disputes about debts that have been sold, and the need to provide all documentation regarding a debt to the debt collector without delay.
- Dr Helen Haines MP introduced a private members bill which largely reflected the recommendations made by ACCAN to the consultation on Statutory Infrastructure Provider standards, rules and benchmarks.
- ACCAN participated in the October 2021 Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) virtual delegation, during which the RRRCC's messages were well received, and after which Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP introduced a motion about the importance of regional connectivity that was debated in the House of Representatives.
- The Regional Telecommunications Review Independent Committee's report incorporated many of the recommendations called for in ACCAN's submission, including for NBN Co. to implement a product for low income consumers and income support recipients.
- ACCAN's Priority Assistance policy position was finalised and publicly launched to a group of government, regulatory and industry stakeholders.
- ACCAN's recommendations regarding the Industry Code: Existing Customer Authentication were adopted.
- Many of ACCAN's recommendations were incorporated into the telecommunications chapter of Infrastructure Australia's 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan.
- ACCAN's research, policy positions and submission recommendations were incorporated into the ACMA's Statement of Expectations on Consumer Vulnerability. This includes the adoption of our recommendation regarding expanding priority area 5 to include credit and debt management, and the addition of many of our suggestions into the examples provided under each of the priority areas.

# CONSUMER AWARENESS

**A**CCAN has continued to be a credible source of information for the media about Australian communications consumers. During the 2021-22 financial year we achieved 516 media mentions across print, TV, radio, and online media.

We informed media about important consumer issues and developments, issuing 15 media releases covering topics including the Regional Telecommunications Review, new research finding that nearly three-quarters of Australians want better complaints handling from digital platforms, the need to close the digital divide in First Nations communities and the extension of NBN Co. financial assistance packages.

We responded to a wide range of enquiries from media about consumer issues including telecommunications outages during extreme weather events, increasing prices for Telstra customers, consumer losses to scam text messages, and allegations of misconduct from providers.

Our media comments appeared in high-profile outlets across a variety of channels. These outlets included ABC News, The Australian Financial Review, The Australian, The Courier Mail, The Sydney Morning Herald, The New Daily, and multiple AM, and FM radio stations.

As part of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), ACCAN continued to raise awareness of regional, rural, and remote telecommunications issues through the media. Media stories focused on a range of issues including mobile black spots, the findings of the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review, and NBN coverage in estates.

Throughout the financial year, we have kept consumers informed on the latest news, issues and advice with regular blogs, and updated consumer resources. We have also amplified this content through our social media and used these platforms to engage in dialogue with consumers.

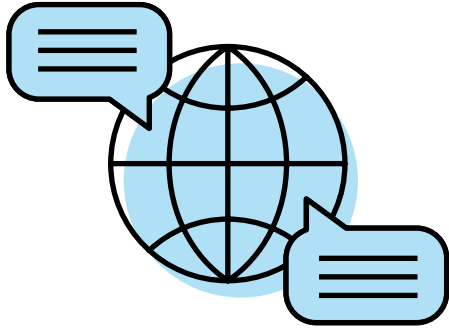
We posted 16 blogs on the ACCAN website. Topics covered included: handling outages while working from home, a guide to buying a new mobile phone, troubleshooting streaming issues, and protecting your child on social media.

ACCAN's website continues to be a popular hub for consumer information and resources. In total, our website attracted 159,328 page views this financial year. Among the most popular pages on our website were resources on how to spot scam and spam messages, a blog post titled "Poor mobile reception – what can you do?" and a tip sheet about travelling overseas with a mobile phone.

This year saw our social media audience once again increase, with ACCAN's accounts generating an audience of almost 6,000 followers across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

See our highlights on the next page for more information on our consumer reach and social media.

# MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



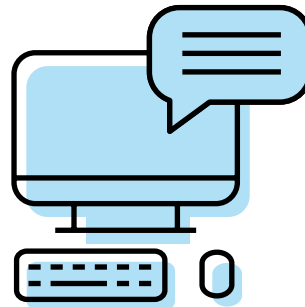
**516**  
MEDIA MENTIONS



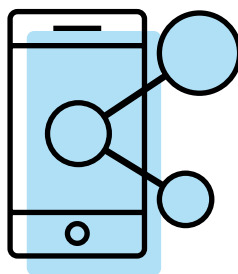
**15**  
MEDIA RELEASES



**159,328**  
WEBPAGE VIEWS



**16**  
BLOG POSTS



ALMOST **6,000**  
FOLLOWERS ACROSS  
TWITTER, FACEBOOK,  
LINKEDIN AND INSTAGRAM

# ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

**A**CCAN's approach to engagement and outreach continued to be conducted virtually for much of 2021-22 due to nationwide border closures and rolling lockdowns.

ACCAN once again partnered with stakeholders and supporters to engage with members and consumer groups, utilising the now more familiar digital platforms to build on the ability to involve consumers from all parts of Australia. Where possible, ACCAN also attended several face-to-face events. Some highlights include:

## INCREASED RELIABILITY

ACCAN continued the ACCANect online series in 2021. This series provided a platform for telecommunications consumers to hear from leading voices in the telco sector about the key communications issues impacting consumers. ACCAN's 2021 Guests were Julian Leeser MP, Federal Member for Berowra (Liberal Party) and the Hon Ed Husic MP, Member for Chifley (Australian Labor Party).

## ACCANECT 2021 #DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

In September ACCAN held its first virtual conference. *ACCANect 2021 #Digital Download* featured a range of presentations about key topics including: cyber security advice for small businesses, how Australians' changing communications

habits are driving change in the telecommunications sector, and what the digital platforms are doing to tackle misinformation. The one day event was well attended with close to 300 registered attendees.

## NO AUSTRALIAN LEFT OFFLINE - ACCAN/NBN LOCAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES

ACCAN, together with the NBN Co. local team, held the 2021 series of the No Australian Left Offline roundtables via videoconference from July to December 2021. ACCAN continued with a further six roundtables to update and revisit issues state-by-state. The roundtables provided a practical opportunity to review the 2020 consumer issues and share valuable information on the telecommunications industry's responses to ongoing issues relating to COVID-19, natural disasters and affordability.

A total of 100 participants attended the roundtable series, with representatives from peak

bodies, community organisations, consumer advocacy organisations, government, and ACCAN members contributing to the discussions.

## AUSTRALIAN SENIORS COMPUTER CLUBS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

In November 2021, ACCAN participated in the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association conference - *Thriving online: make tech work for you*. ACCAN gave a presentation on Accessible Telecoms and provided updates, advice and consumer education materials on inclusion.

## ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

ACCAN attended the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) virtually in November 2021. The ICPA celebrated its 50th annual federal conference in Longreach with a hybrid event.



## **INAUGURAL ACCAN SUE SALTHOUSE MEMORIAL LECTURE**

In December 2021, ACCAN held the inaugural Sue Salthouse Memorial Lecture. To be held annually, the memorial lecture honours Sue Salthouse and celebrates Sue's unfailing commitment to disability advocacy and human rights.

## **COSBOA 2022 NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT**

ACCAN attended the Council of Small Business of Australia 2022 National Summit in April at a face-to-face event in Sydney. The conference themed *Perspectives, Policy, and Purpose* provided an opportunity to raise awareness of ACCAN's role for consumers and small business and to network with key stakeholders, senior politicians, and representatives from small businesses nationwide.

## **FINANCIAL COUNSELLING AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE**

ACCAN attended the national Financial Counselling Australia conference in Cairns in May 2022. ACCAN participated in a panel on digital inclusion. We also engaged with delegates to raise awareness of ACCAN's consumer education materials.

## **FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCILS OF AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE**

In June 2022 ACCAN attended the FECCA conference in Melbourne. The theme of *Advancing Multicultural Australia* provided opportunities for ACCAN to engage with attendees on issues to do with inclusive communications and digital inclusion.

# POLICY

**A**CCAN's policy work has been guided by our six major policy priority areas for 2021-22: affordable telecommunications for all, a fairer telco market, better infrastructure, growing consumer confidence, improved accessibility, and increased reliability.

## AFFORDABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR ALL

A big focus of ACCAN's affordability work in the 2021-22 financial year was NBN Co. wholesale pricing, which is passed on to consumers by telco retailers, making it critical to the affordability of NBN services. We have continued to work closely with NBN Co., industry and regulators on the development of a low income home broadband service. This advocacy has occurred primarily in relation to the NBN Special Access Undertaking Variation, and will continue into the next financial year.

In October 2021 we published our commissioned research which looked into the effectiveness of programs and offers being provided by the telco industry to assist low income households and individuals with the affordability of their telecommunications services. The findings of this research will guide our future advocacy efforts, including our continued advocacy for a review of retail low income measures.

## A FAIRER TELCO MARKET

A focus of our work for reforms to support fairer treatment of telecommunications consumers included working with our members and stakeholders to develop a policy position around the need for a registration scheme for carriage service providers in the consumer market. We believe such a scheme would help bring the telco industry in line with other essential services and help give consumers confidence that their phone or internet provider follows the rules and meets minimum performance standards. This policy position will be published in the 2022-23 financial year.

Over this period, we worked closely with ACCAN's Indigenous Steering Committee to respond to various consultations relating to First Nations digital inclusion, and the treatment of First Nations consumers by telecommunications providers. We also undertook extensive consultation with our members and other community groups to inform our submission to the ACMA consultation on its Statement of Expectations regarding consumer vulnerability.

In partnership with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) we commissioned research into the payment issues currently being experienced by telco and energy consumers.

## BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCAN has engaged with numerous consultations relating to better regional infrastructure over the course of the year, including advocacy efforts alongside the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC). This included advocating our positions to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review. A number of our recommendations were mirrored in the final report of the Regional Telecommunications Review, illustrating the significant influence that our work, and that of other RRRCC members, had on that process.

We also published our Future of Broadband policy position, following a series of workshops with experts and community representatives exploring what consumer safeguards and measures need to be put in place to ensure the benefits of broadband are maximised into the future.



## GROWING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Over the past year, ACCAN has engaged with various consultations aimed at improving privacy protections and online safety to ensure consumers can engage safely and confidently online. This included work in relation to scams, fraud and mis/dis-information.

We have engaged with discussions regarding the rollout of the Consumer Data Right (CDR) in the telecommunications sector. ACCAN is in principle supportive of the introduction of the CDR regime across the telecommunications sector to enable consumers to make more informed choices and encourage market competition, however the benefits associated with the CDR regime will only be available if the system is readily accessible and affordable for consumers.

## IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY

In November 2021 ACCAN held a consultation with disability organisations to identify the pain-points that consumers with disability face when engaging with their telecommunications service providers. The insights gathered from this forum have helped us prioritise our work on the strategic actions outlined in the Ideal Accessible Communications Roadmap. This includes an update to our policy position regarding the public procurement of accessible information and communications technologies, with a launch of this policy position in August 2022.

## INCREASED RELIABILITY

ACCAN has continued to advocate for increased reliability of phone and internet services, with the need for reliable communications services again at the fore, not only due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, but also from the significant flooding seen across parts of Australia.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications consulted in early 2021 on a draft Determination for standards, rules and benchmarks for Statutory Infrastructure Providers (SIPs) regarding timeframes for connections, repairs and appointment keeping. While work on this draft Determination has been delayed, ACCAN has continued to advocate that more needs to be done to safeguard the delivery of high-quality, reliable telecommunications services, including the setting of both wholesale and retail level service standards and commitments.

ACCAN also launched our Priority Assistance policy position, which outlines the changes that would be required for existing Priority Assistance arrangements to better meet consumer expectations and the changing communications landscape. ACCAN has engaged with government and industry alike in advocating for the recommendations of this position to be adopted.

# INDEPENDENT GRANTS PROGRAM

**T**he 2021-22 period has been an exciting time for the Independent Grants Program, with the majority of projects funded under the previous two rounds completing their work. ACCAN worked hard to maintain close and productive working relationships with grantees, as they faced some of the greatest disruptions to their projects with continued lockdowns forcing agility of methodologies and scope, while still ensuring projects delivered on their stated objectives and outcomes for consumers. Together, these projects funded by ACCAN's Grants Program form a solid base for renewed consumer representation in the areas of inclusivity, Internet of Things, digital platforms and other emerging issues for consumers, such as the connectivity needs of people living and working in our regional areas.

All resources produced under the Program are also available on our website: [accan.org.au/grants](https://accan.org.au/grants)

Projects completed this year:

## **QUESTIONING THE CHATBOT: SCRUTINISING THE PERFORMANCE OF TELCO CUSTOMER SERVICE CHATBOTS IN TERMS OF SERVICE, TRANSPARENCY, SAFETY, PRIVACY AND SECURITY**

Produced by the University of Melbourne, this project investigated the role of chatbots and other forms of automated assistants in the telecommunications industry. The project aimed to understand consumer experience with telco chatbots, including the experiences of consumer groups who require accessible chatbots (consumers with disabilities and consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), identifying risks and harms caused by chatbots, and informing the design, use and regulation of customer service chatbots for consumer protection and welfare. The report recommended strategies that would assist consumers in navigating those risks.

[accan.org.au/questioning-the-chatbot](https://accan.org.au/questioning-the-chatbot)

## **OPTIONS FOR A COMPLAINT-HANDLING FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS**

This research project undertaken by the University of Technology Sydney highlighted a growing need for an effective resolution of complaints from consumers of internet services – specifically, users of digital platforms. The objectives were to advise

consumer, industry, and government stakeholders about the current internal complaint-handling arrangements, as well as to provide an Australian framework on this aspect of digital platform regulation. Responding to a policy priority identified in the Government's 'Implementation Roadmap' for the Digital Platforms Inquiry, the project draws on experience in telecommunications consumer complaint handling, with particular focus on the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman scheme.

[accan.org.au/complaint-handling-digital-platforms](https://accan.org.au/complaint-handling-digital-platforms)

## **UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL INEQUALITY**

Despite major infrastructure improvements, around 2.5 million Australians still experience barriers to access, digital ability, and affordability. To respond to this issue, the University of Melbourne undertook a consumer research project aimed at demonstrating that digital inequality is not measured by access to internet alone, but also by quality of service and internet providers' accountability. Adopting methodologies such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys, the research report showcased that affordability



alone is not a determinant of access to reliable fast internet. The project team produced a series of snapshot reports in community languages.

[accan.org.au/understanding-digital-inequality](https://accan.org.au/understanding-digital-inequality)

## **AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SURVEILLANCE RISKS FAMILY PLANS PRESENT FOR USERS VULNERABLE TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The report produced by the Charles Sturt University outlined the risks and issues around Family Plans offered by most Australian telcos in relation to domestic and family violence. The project gathered information about Family Plans from the three major telcos (Telstra, Optus, and Vodafone) and examined the strategies used to motivate consumers to sign up for them. The findings suggested the significance of understanding surveillance and privacy invasion risks associated with these plans. The report made four recommendations that would help reduce and eliminate surveillance and privacy invasion risks. These include improving transparency

and awareness of data sharing, and/or to replace Family Plans with dual contract offers.

[accan.org.au/surveillance-risks-family-plans](https://accan.org.au/surveillance-risks-family-plans)

## **ENHANCING DIGITAL ADAPTABILITY OF AUSTRALIAN SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES**

This project by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) investigated how small retail businesses can enhance their digital adaptability by working with telecommunications service providers. It identifies the challenges that small retail businesses face when using advanced digital services (such as e-commerce and cybersecurity services) and offers recommendations on how to address these challenges. To achieve the objectives, interviews, surveys, and co-design workshops were conducted with key stakeholders, such as small retail businesses, small business associations, telecommunications service providers, and industry associations.

[accan.org.au/digital-adaptability-australian-businesses](https://accan.org.au/digital-adaptability-australian-businesses)

## **E-CHANGE AND REMOTE WORK IN AUSTRALIA**

This project by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) analysed the telecommunications needs of consumers and small businesses who are engaged in remote work outside our large cities ('e-changers'), and whether current policies and investment are being met. Through online ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation with workers, small businesses, and other stakeholders, the project examined the day-to-day experiences of working remotely outside a traditional office setting. The key findings of this report underlined issues in new work practices, shifts in values around the place of work and lifestyle, the importance of digital services, the role of domestic design and infrastructure, the impact of choice of location, and the impact of long commuting in relation to public transport and mobile digital connectivity.

[accan.org.au/echange-remote-work-australia](https://accan.org.au/echange-remote-work-australia)

## **ACHIEVE BETTER BROADBAND FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

This project assisted regional and rural areas to effectively engage with their local communities and build a business case for the implementation of network capabilities to support their current and future needs. The project delivered a set of resources that can be applied across regional, rural and remote areas to help communities identify local requirements to achieve better Internet connectivity to support their economic and social growth.

The resources explain what the Wamboin Community Action Group did and found useful to raise the profile of the issue such that the provision of robust, future proof networking could be implemented. The documentation is aimed at other areas wishing to improve their communications infrastructure and who have a similar population density.

[accan.org.au/better-broadband-regional-communities](https://accan.org.au/better-broadband-regional-communities)

## **CONSUMER UNDERSTANDINGS OF SMART TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR APPLICATIONS IN NORTH WEST NSW REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

This research was conducted by Dr. Holly Randell-Moon from the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at the Dubbo campus of Charles Sturt University, Australia. Drawing on over 130 participants and 6 case studies, the report outlined a set of recommendations that include promoting information about consumer rights and smart technologies to rural and regional communities, fostering trust in technology and smart-tech benefits among the community, and identifying opportunities for smart regions to further engage with First Nations communities.

[accan.org.au/smart-technologies-regional-nsw](https://accan.org.au/smart-technologies-regional-nsw)

## **ACCESS ON DEMAND: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY OPTIONS ON STREAMING TELEVISION**

This consumer research project by Curtin University explored accessibility features such as closed captions (CC) of video on demand (VOD) in Australia in relation to consumers with disabilities. The report presented a study about the accessibility of free to air catch-up television offerings. Through online surveys, interviews, and other data, the report's findings observed that accessibility is becoming significant in the broader community for both people with and without disabilities. It also found that audio description is considered an essential accessibility feature for people with disability. The research showed that Australians hold broadcasters and providers responsible for the provision of accessibility features, and that VOD became an important form of entertainment during COVID-19 lockdowns in Australia.

[accan.org.au/access-on-demand-streaming](https://accan.org.au/access-on-demand-streaming)



## APPS CAN TRAP: TIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

The Australian Council on Children and the Media (now known as Children and Media Australia) conducted a consumer research and education project regarding the data gathered by some of the most popular children's apps in Australia. The researchers established the Apps Can Track website, a comprehensive tool highlighting digital privacy issues. It includes AppCensus data, tracking the privacy concerns of the Top 50 children's apps in the country, and educates parents and children on how to recognise and minimise threats to privacy from children's apps.

[accan.org.au/apps-can-trap](https://accan.org.au/apps-can-trap)

## TELCOS FOR ALL: ADDRESSING KEY ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES FACED BY CONSUMERS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER WEBSITES

This project by the Centre for Accessibility Australia built on previous work, applying established accessibility standards to audit and user-test the websites of Australia's leading telecommunications providers: Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Belong, and Amaysim. The research report, workshop and video aimed at achieving improved access for consumers with disability to plans, usage, billing, content, and other information provided by the telcos.


[accan.org.au/telcos-for-all](https://accan.org.au/telcos-for-all)

## REGULATION OF INTERNET OF THINGS DEVICES TO PROTECT CONSUMERS

Despite transforming the way people live and work, the Internet of Things (IOT) are exposed to privacy and security breaches. In response, the University of Technology Sydney conducted a consumer research project that aimed at developing comprehensive regulatory options for protecting consumers, strengthening industry liability, and incorporating privacy and security by design. Key themes from this research, including aligning laws and 'joining up' regulation, consumer education, accessibility and inclusivity, informed recommendations for reforming cyber security, consumer protection and data privacy law and regulation.

[accan.org.au/regulation-of-iot-devices](https://accan.org.au/regulation-of-iot-devices)

# COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PROGRAM

 Our research program provides ACCAN, and the sector, with an easy to use and consumer-focused evidence base on a range of policy issues.

## ADDRESSING TELE-COMMUNICATIONS AFFORDABILITY: EVALUATING SUPPORT FOR LOW INCOME CONSUMERS

The second part of a larger study, this work examined consumer and community stakeholder views on the retail offers identified in a previously published collection of programs offered by telcos to help consumers pay for their phone and internet services. The report by Action Market Research found that programs and offers provided by the telecommunications industry can be highly effective at addressing the needs of low income households, but that existing measures could be expanded, simplified and better advertised.

ACCAN has analysed the research findings and highlighted what gaps remain and what needs to be done to better support low income consumers with their telecommunications needs.

[accan.org.au/telco-affordability](https://accan.org.au/telco-affordability)

## DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

This quantitative study revealed that almost three in four Australians agree that it needs to be easier to make a complaint, and to get their issues resolved, when dealing with digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, eBay, and Service NSW.

The nationally representative survey of 1,000 Australians found that 74% of respondents think that it needs to be easier for people to make a complaint, and 78% think that it needs to be easier for people to get their issues resolved on digital platforms. Digital platforms were defined as websites and apps such as social media, Government online services, job search sites, dating apps, messaging apps and online marketplaces. ACCAN's polling also shows that 60% of Australians feel there's not much they can do when something goes wrong online.

This research provides the sector with Australian based consumer evidence to support advocacy for better consumer protections for digital platforms.

[accan.org.au/digital-platforms-consumer-experience](https://accan.org.au/digital-platforms-consumer-experience)

## ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING AND SOCIETY

ACCAN is one of several foundational supporters for this national, cross-disciplinary research centre. Hosted at RMIT, it works to create the knowledge and strategies necessary for responsible, ethical and inclusive decision making.

Our partnership facilitates timely translation of results into practical resources for consumers and helps build trust and understanding of these new technologies.

[admscentre.org.au](https://admscentre.org.au)

# ACCESSIBLE TELECOMS



**T**he Accessible Telecoms service has now been in operation for four years. Initiated under a NDIA grant in 2018, ACCAN has been continuing to provide the service since July 2020 with intermittent financial assistance from some telecommunications providers and handset manufacturers.

While we have managed to provide a pared-down service over the past 2 years, we continue to engage with both the industry and the Government to find a permanent and sustainable funding model to keep the service fully operational.

The utility of the service continues to grow as we promote the service broadly across both the disability and the seniors' sectors. We have a network of more than seven hundred organisations that we regularly update on new accessibility features and new equipment as they are introduced into the Australian market.

Year-on-year contacts continue to grow across all channels – website, webchat, email, and phone calls. The number of website visits continue to increase reaching almost 10,000 visits per month over the past several months.



The Accessible Telecoms team also field a growing number of phone and email contacts, providing up-to-date and independent information about the access features of telecommunications equipment suitable for people with disability and seniors.

During the past year we have also provided multiple training presentations to community organisations and assistive technology providers.

The service provides in excess of 550 consumer information resources across the various categories. The majority of these resources related to handsets and

tablets refer consumers back to telecommunications providers who can provide the device to customers.

ACCAN's long term commitment of providing consumers with the essential information they need to connect and stay connected to the essential telecommunications network continues to be valued by consumers, industry, and government alike.

# SUBMISSIONS

**A**CCAN engaged in an extensive range of consultations with industry, government, regulatory and other bodies in 2021-2022. The following submissions can be found on our website.

[accan.org.au/accans-work/submissions](https://accan.org.au/accans-work/submissions)

## JULY 2021

- Communications Alliance, Review of AS/ACIF S040:2001 Features for special needs of persons with disabilities Standard
- Telco Together Foundation, Modern slavery application for authorisation AA1000555
- Digital Transformation Agency, Digital Identity Legislation Position Paper
- NBN Product Development Forum, NBN Special Access Undertaking Variation – 2021 discussion paper
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), NBN SAU Regulation discussion paper
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Fax Marketing Industry Standard
- Treasury, Consumer Data Right Rules – Version 3 consultation

## AUGUST 2021

- NBN Product Development Forum, Product Idea Submission – Launtel (confidential)

- Treasury, Consumer Data Right Strategic Assessment and Telecommunications Sectoral Assessment papers
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Digital Platform Services Inquiry – March 2022 Report on General Online Retail Marketplaces Issues Paper
- auDA, auDA 2021-25 Proposed Strategy
- Communications Alliance, Scheduled Review of C540:2013 Local Number Portability – Incorporating Variation No.1/2016
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Peri-Urban Mobile Program – Grant Opportunity Guidelines

## SEPTEMBER 2021

- Department of Home Affairs, Cyber Security Regulations and Incentives Discussion Paper
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Consumer vulnerability: Expectations for the Telecommunications Industry

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Wholesale ADSL service declaration inquiry 2021
- eSafety Commissioner, Restricted Access System Discussion Paper
- Communications Alliance, DR C666:2021 Existing Customer Authentication Code
- Treasury, Strengthening protections against unfair contract terms
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review

## OCTOBER 2021

- Digital Transformation Agency, Digital Identity Legislation
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Regional Connectivity Program Round 2 Grant Guidelines

## NOVEMBER 2021

- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and

- Communications (DITRDC), Issues Paper: A Captioning Scheme for Subscription Television
- National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan Discussion Paper
- The Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee, Inquiry into Telstra Corporation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Telecommunications (Carrier Licence Conditions – Telstra Corporation Limited) Amendment (Regional Service Information) Instrument 2021
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Draft Online Safety (Basic Online Safety Expectations) Determination 2021
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Audit of Telecommunications Infrastructure Assets – Record Keeping Rules Consultation paper

- eSafety Commissioner, Draft Restricted Access System Declaration 2021

## DECEMBER 2021

- Attorney-General's Department, Draft Online Privacy Bill
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, How the corporate sector establishes models of best practice to foster better engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Superfast broadband access service - Final Access Determination inquiry
- Treasury, Consumer Data Right – Telecommunications draft designated instrument
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Draft Customer ID Verification Determination – New rules to prevent fraud from unauthorised customer interactions with telcos

## JANUARY 2022

- Attorney-General's Department, Privacy Act Review

- House of Representatives Select Committee on Social Media and Online Safety, Online Safety Inquiry
- Treasury, Pre-Budget Submission 2022-2023
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Remaking the Telecommunications (Listed Infringement Notice Provisions) Declaration 2011
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Remaking the Telecommunications (Payphone Performance Benchmarks) Record-Keeping Rules 2012

## FEBRUARY 2022

- Treasury, Improving consumer guarantees and supplier indemnification provisions under the Australian Consumer Law
- NBN, Connecting Australia's agricultural landscape
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Review of Instruments under Part 20A of the Telecommunications Act 1997

- NBN Product Development Forum, Sky Muster Plus product evolution
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Review of sunseting payphone instruments
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Broadband speed claims: industry guidance

## MARCH 2022

- Communications Alliance, C661:2022 Reducing Scam Calls And Scam SMs Industry Code
- Communications Alliance, C525:2017 Incorporating Variation No.1/2018 – Handling of Life Threatening and Unwelcome Communications Code
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO), Draft device equipment guidance for public comment
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Compliance priorities 2022-23

## APRIL 2022

- Treasury, CDR Rules and Standards Design paper for Telco sector

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Digital Platforms Services September 2022 interim report Inquiry
- Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), Streaming Services Reporting and Investment Scheme
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Telstra Corporation Limited, Telstra Limited and NBN Co Limited application for authorisation AA1000607

## MAY 2022

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), s581ZH review of the corporate control percentage (Access to Telecommunications Facilities: ACCC review of the corporate control percentage)
- Queen Margaret University, 5 yearly TIO Review
- Treasury, Statutory Review of the Consumer Data Right: Issues Paper
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Draft Exemption and Target Reduction Orders

## JUNE 2022

- Department of Home Affairs, National Data Security Action Plan
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Telstra/TPG application for merger authorisation
- Communications Alliance, C540:2022 Local Number Portability Industry Code
- Communications Alliance, C566:2022 Number Management – Use of Numbers by Customers Industry Code
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Draft Target Reduction Orders
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Amending the Telecommunications (Listed Infringement Notice Provisions) Declaration 2022 – consultation 18/2022



# PUBLICATIONS



Australian Council on Children and the Media, 2021. *Apps Can Trap - Tips for Protecting Children's Privacy*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Centre for Accessibility, 2021. *Telcos for all: Addressing Key Accessibility Issues Faced by Consumers on Telco Carrier Websites*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Ellis, K., Locke, K., Peaty, G., Hersinta, & Kao, K-T., 2021. *Access On Demand: An Analysis of the Accessibility Options on Streaming Television*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Figueiredo, B., Aleti, T., Reid, M., Martin M. D., Hjorth, L., Buschgens, M., Kutin, J. & Sheahan, J., 2021, *Co-designing Participatory Strategies With Older Adults to Reduce Perceived Risk and Promote Digital Inclusion*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Glover, A., Lewis, T. & Waters-Lynch, J., 2022. *E-Change and Remote Work in Australia*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Lindsay, D., Wilkinson, G., & Wright, E., 2022. *Regulation of Internet of Things Devices to Protect Consumers*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Randell-Moon, H. & Hynes, D., 2022. *Consumer Understandings of Smart Technologies and Their Applications in North West NSW Regional and Rural Communities*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.



Wamboin Communications Action Group (WCAG), 2021. *Achieve Better Broadband for Regional Communities - How to establish a community group*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

# EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

1. ACCC Consumer Consultative Committee
2. ACCC/AER Infrastructure Consultative Committee
3. ACCC Performance Consultative Committee
4. ACMA Consumer Consultative Forum
5. ACMA Numbering Advisory Committee
6. auDA General Advisory Standing Committee
7. Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance Governance Committee
8. Communications Alliance IPND Code Working Committee
9. Communications Alliance Priority Assistance Code Working Committee
10. Communications Alliance Local Number Portability Code Working Committee (LNP)
11. Communications Alliance Life Threatening and Unwelcome Communications Code Working Group
12. Communications Compliance Advisory Committee
13. Consumers Federation of Australia Executive Committee
14. Collective Voice, ADIA
15. DITRDC Triple Zero Co-ordination Committee
16. DITRDC Alternate Voice Trial Stakeholder Group
17. Internet of Things Alliance of Australia Executive Council
18. International Telecommunications Users Group Board
19. Office of the Aust. Information Commissioner Consumer Privacy Network
20. National Indigenous Agency of Australia Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan Stakeholder Working Group
21. NBN Co. Product Development Forum
22. SBS & ABC Audio Description Advisory Committee
23. Standards Australia JTC 1 Advisory Committee
24. Standards Australia IT 040 ICT Accessibility
25. Standards Australia COPOLCO Mirror Committee
26. Standards Australia QR 015 Complaint Handling
27. Standards Australia Council
28. Standards Australia IT-020 Text Communications Equipment for use by People with Disabilities
29. Standards Australia Nominating Organisations Forum
30. Telstra CEO and Consumer Roundtable
31. Telstra Disability Forum
32. TIO Consumer Panel
33. TIO Board Nominations Committee

# CONSULTATION

**D**ue to the ongoing situation with COVID-19 and the successful virtual advisory forums held in 2020-21, ACCAN's advisory forums were again held virtually this year. As was the case last year, using videoconferencing allowed participants from across Australia to join our advisory forums, expanding both ACCAN's accessibility and engagement with advisory forum participants.

## MEMBERS' ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Members' Advisory Forum (MAF) is to discuss the most important issues from the perspective of ACCAN's members and the people they represent.

The MAF meeting was held on 24 March 2022. Representatives from Broome CIRCLE, CHOICE, Consumer Action Law Centre, Consumer Policy Research Centre, Regional Development Australia (Northern Territory) and Women's Legal Service NSW attended the meeting, amongst others.

## DISABILITY ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Disability Advisory Forum (DAF) is to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of key representatives in the disability sector.

The DAF meeting was held on 30 March 2022. Representatives from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Physical Disability Council of NSW, STAR Victoria and Vision Australia attended the meeting.

## SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY FORUM

The purpose of the Small Business Advisory Forum (SBAF) is to discuss the most important telecommunications consumer issues from the perspective of key representatives in the small business environment.

The SBAF meeting was held on 21 April 2022. Representatives from the Australian Small Business Family Enterprise Ombudsman's Office, Business Olympian Group, Council of Small Business Organisations Australia, Digital Gold, and the Small Business Council of Tasmania attended the meeting, amongst others.

## INDIGENOUS STEERING COMMITTEE

Discussions at ACCAN's May 2021 Indigenous Advisory Forum meeting in Lismore, NSW resulted in the decision that an Indigenous Steering Committee would be

formed to guide ACCAN's work to close the digital divide for Indigenous consumers. It was discussed that this Committee would meet quarterly, as opposed to the Indigenous Advisory Forum, which was previously held annually.

The goals and priorities of the Indigenous Steering Committee include:

- Empowerment of communities to make culturally appropriate decisions, such as using Wi-Fi networks to allow for more community control, modification of mobile networks to allow for content restrictions.
- Programs to build confidence in communities by developing the skills needed to deal with scams, gaming, social media, and training and support.

The first Indigenous Steering Committee meeting was held on 12 October 2021, followed by subsequent meetings on 16 February 2022 and 17 May 2022.

# ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

## AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

- 2508+Disconnected
- Able Australia
- Acceleon Pty Ltd
- AccessPlus WA Deaf
- Achieve Australia
- ACT Council of Social Service Inc
- Adult Learning Australia
- Association of Independent Retirees
- auDA - .au Domain Administration
- Australian Council of Social Service
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Australian Privacy Foundation
- Australian Regional Business Development Specialists
- Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association
- Benevolent Society (The)
- Better Hearing Australia
- Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Broadband Alliance Inc. t/a Australian Smart Communities Association
- CARE Inc.
- Central Land Council
- Centre for Accessibility Australia
- Centre for Appropriate Technology
- Centre for Inclusive Design
- CHOICE
- CITIES - Centre for Indigenous Technology Information and Engineering Solutions
- Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc.
- Communication Rights Australia
- Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
- Community Legal Centres NSW
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Consumer Credit Legal Service WA
- Consumer Policy Research Centre
- Consumers' Association of South Australia
- Consumers' Federation of Australia
- Cotton Australia
- Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia
- Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc.
- Council on the Ageing Australia
- Deaf Australia
- Deaf Children Australia
- DeafBlind Australia
- Deafness Forum of Australia
- Desert Knowledge Australia
- Differently Abled People Association Inc.
- Digital Gap Initiative Ltd
- Digital Tasmania
- Electronic Frontiers Australia
- Ethnic Communities Council of WA
- Expression Australia
- Family Drug Support
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- Financial Counselling Australia
- Financial Counselling Victoria Inc
- Financial Counsellors Association of Queensland
- Financial Counsellors Association of Western Australia
- Financial Rights Legal Centre
- HK Training & Consultancy Pty Ltd
- IDEAS NSW
- IEEE SSIT Australia
- Illawarra Legal Centre Inc
- Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd
- Indigenous Remote Communications Association
- Infoxchange
- Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development
- Internet Australia
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association Australia
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association NT
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association Queensland
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA
- itControl
- Kaay Holdings Pty Ltd
- Leep NGO Inc.
- Macdonald Valley Association
- MoneyMob Talkabout Limited
- National Association of Community Legal Centres
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre
- National Council of Women of Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- National Farmers' Federation
- North Melbourne Language and Learning
- NSW Council of Social Service
- NSW Farmers Association
- People with Disabilities WA
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- Queensland Consumers Association
- Queensland Council of Social Service
- Redfern Legal Centre
- Regional Development Australia Northern Territory Inc
- Scope (Aust) Ltd
- South Australia Isolated Children's Parents Association
- South Australian Financial Counsellors Association
- Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc.
- Tenants Queensland Inc.
- Think+DO Tank Foundation Limited
- Uniting Care Wesley Bowden
- Vision Australia
- Wamboin Communications Action Group
- Westjustice
- Women with Disabilities Australia
- Women's Legal Service NSW
- Women's Legal Services Aust.
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

# ACCAN LIFE MEMBERS

**M**s. Robin Wilkinson was awarded ACCAN Life Membership at the 2021 AGM.

Robin's contribution to consumer representation in telecommunications has been extensive over a 30-year period. As a founding member of ACCAN, Robin has been a supporter of the organisation since its inception. Robin was also a member of the Consumers' Telecommunications Network (CTN) Board from the outset of the organisation's establishment in 1990.

After being Deputy Chairperson for many years, she was elected CTN Chairperson in 2004 and held the position until 2007. Representing Tasmanians with Disabilities, Robin was an active member on the Telstra Consumer Councils and the Optus Consumer Liaison Forum. In her advocacy on behalf of consumers, Robin focused on accessible communications equipment, emergency services, and priority assistance. Her extensive expertise in consumer education meant she was actively involved in working with the regulator, AUSTEL on an extensive re-numbering initiative of all phone numbers in Australia between 1994-1998.

Robin is also known for her promotion of the rights of people with disabilities in communications, leading to international recognition of the work of the CTN and consumer representation in Australia. She sought to build an understanding of universal design principles and the value of consumer consultation in product design and development. Notably, she was a member of the Australian delegation to the 10th Global Standards Collaboration (GSC) meeting in Nice, France in 2005 and the 11th GSC meeting in Chicago, USA in 2006 where she gave presentations to leading engineers and regulators from around the world.

Robin was responsible for ensuring inclusive practices at CTN, and this approach was the basis for the participatory culture that is now a part of ACCAN's DNA. As a consumer representative Elder, Robin was

honoured as a special guest at the ACCAN m-Enabling Conference in 2013 in Sydney. Since then, she has continued to mentor and support ACCAN staff who value her extensive knowledge and history on consumers' accessibility and telecommunications needs for many years. Her approach of "nothing about us without us" is now embedded in the approach to consumer advocacy in communications in Australia.

Robin joins the following ACCAN Life Members:

- Gunela Astbrink
- Ian Binnie
- Nan Bosler AM
- Gerard Goggin
- Johanna Plante
- Sue Salthouse AM (deceased)
- Nigel Waters

# ACCAN BOARD



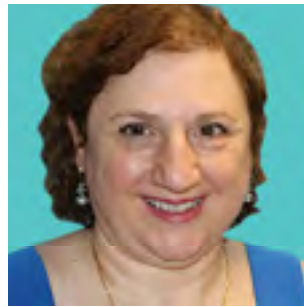
**Chris Dodds**  
Elected: 2021  
Terms Ends: 2022



**Scott Winch**  
Elected: 2021  
Terms Ends: 2022



**Sarah Wilson**  
Elected: 2016  
Terms Ends: 2022



**Nadia Moffatt**  
Elected: 2016  
Terms Ends: 2022



**Keith Besgrove**  
Elected: 2019  
Terms Ends: 2022



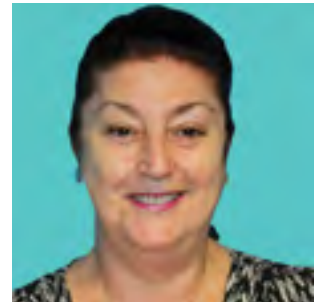
**Holly Raiche**  
Elected: 2020  
Terms Ends: 2023



**Deirdre O'Donnell**  
Elected: 2020  
Terms Ends: 2023



**Gareth Downing**  
Elected: 2020  
Terms Ends: 2023



**Victoria Rubensohn**  
Elected: 2020  
Terms Ends: 2024



**Julian Thomas**  
Elected: 2018  
Terms Ends: 2024



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You can contact  
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National Relay Service:  
[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)



**Australian Communications  
Consumer Action Network**