

The summary below outlines ACCAN's activities from 1 September – 30 November 2022

ACCAN's policy team has been busy responding to consultation opportunities and progressing our proactive policy work, with our submission work increasing this quarter.

This included responses to the House Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts Inquiry into co-investment in multi-carrier regional mobile infrastructure, the Department's consultation on Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the Improving Mobile Coverage Round Mobile Blackspot Program and the Productivity Commission's 5 Year Productivity Inquiry: Australia's data and digital dividend paper. These submissions focused on the need for ongoing investment in regional, rural and remote telecommunications infrastructure.

Regulatory arrangements for retailers and the TCP Code have formed the focus of much of ACCAN's engagement this quarter. This work has focused on identifying emerging issues with the TCP code and establishing priority areas for reform. ACCAN's engagement indicates strong support for its Consumer Safeguards Part C submission.

ACCAN's inclusion team has undertaken extensive consultation with people with disability to inform our submission to the Australian Disability Strategy and to engage on progressing ACCAN's Ideal Accessible Communications Roadmap.

ACCAN has also drafted policy positions this quarter on retail registration, right to repair and an independent comparison tool.

ACCAN has met with government, industry and regulatory representatives on issues such as reliability, regional communications, affordability of NBN, cyber-security and privacy arrangements.

Pleasingly, the recent budget included funding commitments to several measures reflecting ACCAN policy recommendations, including mobile black spots and the peri-urban mobile program. Further funding was allocated to support First Nations digital inclusion efforts, in keeping with ACCAN's recommendations to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review.

Without doubt, the standout engagement event for the period was ACCAN's annual ACCANect conference. We also delivered various media this quarter issuing 4 news stories and 4 consumer education brochures with information on how to keep small business safe from cyber criminals. ACCAN's successful collaboration with Google continued, with another advertising push via YouTube and socials promoting scam awareness.

ACCAN participated in 93 different outreach, consumer engagement events, member events and consultation discussions this quarter. A number of these were conducted in-person, with ACCAN staff traveling to interstate events including the ACMA RadComms Conference in Melbourne and the Indigenous Digital Leadership Forum in Alice Springs.

ACCAN represented consumers at 14 committee meetings throughout the period, engaged with government and regulatory bodies on 41 different occasions and industry bodies on 21 occasions. ACCAN met with industry through the formal quarterly meeting framework as well as supplementary meetings as required. We are actively working on 8 of the 32 committees on which we represent consumers.

ACCAN proactively provided comments to the media on a range of major issues including Starlink & satellite mobile services, the Optus data breach, telecommunications during floods, and the ACCC Digital Platform Services Inquiry. ACCAN responded to 11 media enquiries including mobile coverage, ACCC fines, TIO Annual Report and digital inclusion. ACCAN generated 25 media hits across national print, online, TV and radio.

The grants team this quarter has been progressing preparations for the 2023 Independent Grants Round, as well as beginning work on the first of our commissioned research projects, *Affordable Devices*. This research will collate offers from telcos, community organisations, the NDIS, as well as state, territory and federal government programs providing free or subsidised devices.

ACCAN's AGM was held on 29 September. Nominations were received for vacant positions, including that left by Gareth Downing, who resigned from the Board to assume the Deputy CEO position. Keith Besgrove was elected for a second term, Chris Dodds was re-elected having previously been co-opted, and former ACMA executive, Vince Humphries, was elected for a first term. A new life member, Mr Andrew Stewart, was unanimously endorsed at the meeting.

This quarter's Board meeting included the election of office bearers and co-option of additional directors. These discussions are continuing and will be completed ahead of the next Board meeting. Professor Julian Thomas was elected as ACCAN's Chairperson and Holly Raiche as Deputy Chairperson. ACCAN's previous Chairperson, Deirdre O'Donnell PSM, formally tendered her resignation at the end of the November meeting.