



ACCAN Quarterly Progress Report

Period: 1 March – 31 May 2024

1 Overview

Executive summary of activity in the quarter for publication on ACCAN website.

A key priority for the period was engagement with the Department, NBN Co and the ACCC on the progress of the ACCAN economic regulation business case. In May we were pleased to be advised that a budget allocation had been made to provide funding for consumer engagement activities to support the NBN SAU. ACCAN continues to engage with stakeholders to facilitate the finalisation of the engagement framework and funding agreement.

ACCAN continued to respond to issues relating to our three enduring policy priorities. ACCAN made 18 submissions to stakeholder consultations. Reflecting the importance of communications in natural disasters, reliable, resilient and robust infrastructure was a strong theme for the quarter. Key submissions included:

- Better delivery of universal services
- Inquiry into mobile telecommunication failure during widespread power outages in Western Australia
- The shutdown of the 3G mobile network and telecommunications services accessibility

ACCAN's submission on USO reform was developed with targeted consultation of stakeholder groups across Australia and proposed major changes to the framework. Our stakeholder engagement has elevated this issue for impacted communities across the country.

During the current cost of living challenges ACCAN is pleased that our collaboration with stakeholders, including industry, in NBN Co's Low Income and Digital Inclusion Forum (LIDIF), may lead to outcomes that benefit low-income communications consumers.

ACCAN has also noted growing interest and engagement with our policy position to establish an independent plan comparison tool, published in 2022. ACCAN's 2024-25 Pre-Budget submission was noted numerous times in discussions surrounding the possible nature of a future comparison tool.

For the Grants Team, this quarter's focus was the assessment of the 2024 Round of applications to the Grants Program. The Independent Grants Panel met on 31st May to make their recommendations from the remaining 10 shortlisted applications. The new projects are due to begin from July 2024.

The [Affordable Devices](#) project is now published on ACCAN's website and has already gained a lot of interest from our stakeholders. The database will relocate to the Accessible Telecoms website once its redevelopment is complete.

The [UTS Enforcement report](#) was released by the Centre for Media Transition in April.

During the period, ACCAN published seven articles on its website and social media networks. These included guides for consumers and financial counsellors regarding the Financial Hardship Standard, and media releases regarding the need for improved domestic and family violence protections and a safe and well-communicated 3G shutdown.

In May, following the release of the recommendations of the Bean Review, ACCAN was invited to sit on the Triple Zero Custodian Steering Committee. ACCAN looks forward to continuing to engage with the work of the committee and the broader reform agenda.

ACCAN staff participated in 78 different outreach, consumer engagement events, member events and consultation discussions. A particular focus over the quarter has been regional, rural and remote communications and the impact of the impending 3G switch-off.

A further focus of the quarter has been engagement with Deaf community stakeholders on the progress of the National Relay Service tender process, and on opportunities for constructive engagement with government and regulatory stakeholders following finalisation of the tender. ACCAN continues to engage with community stakeholders to understand accessibility issues and to inform our engagement with ongoing policy processes stemming from the Disability Royal Commission.

The ACCAN Board met on March 12, 2024, at UTS. Significant discussion items included ACCAN's new strategic plan for 2024 – 2027 and potential resourcing to undertake consumer engagement and representation in keeping with the revised NBN Special Access Undertaking Replacement Module Application process.

The CEO recruitment process was completed this quarter, with final interviews being conducted early March after which Carol Bennett's appointment was announced.