

Quarter 1, FY15-16

The summary below outlines ACCAN's activities from 1 June to 31 August 2015.

We have seen some significant outcomes from our work in the past three months. Firstly, all three mobile network providers are now offering free calls to 1800 numbers from mobiles. Optus and Vodafone are also passing this on to their wholesale customers, however Telstra has not, and so there are still some small Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) that have not been able to pass this on at this stage. ACCAN and its membership have worked with industry over the last four years to achieve this goal. Another big win for consumers has been the announcement of the Mobile Black Spot Programme with 499 new or upgraded mobile towers to be constructed over the next three years. There was also a further \$60 million in funding announced for a second round in 2016 of this exercise. The ACCAN Community Consultation Kit has been distributed broadly in order to equip communities with effective tools to create a winning submission.

Consumer Representation and Research

The policy team has completed a number of important submissions and major pieces of work including: the TPG iiNet merger, the Regional Telecommunications Review and consultation and feedback on the second draft of the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code. There has also been further work with Telstra and the federal government on the reform of the Customer Service Guarantee and the Network Reliability Framework. On the NBN front, we have participated in a number of significant consultations, including the Bureau of Communications Research consultation on NBN Non-Commercial Services Funding Options, features of the Long Term Satellite Service, and the ACCC's Superfast Broadband Access Inquiry. Other submissions have been made on the Integrated Public Number Database (IPND), priority assistance, Calling Number Display (CND), Mobile Manufacturers Forum *Gari* website and potential changes to auDA domain names policy. We are now preparing to submit to the ACMA Review and starting work on the Review of the Australian Competition and Consumer Law. We are co-ordinating with Choice and other Consumers Federation Australia members on this review.

ACCAN notes there has been little progress on the implementation of the Copyright Notice Scheme Code. We worked to incorporate changes to the explanatory memorandum for the website blocking legislation, which went through Parliament before the winter break, in order to give further clarity on the status of systems that enable the avoidance of content geo-blocking. We are now expecting to see a court case soon that tests the new legislation and blocks likely to be imposed on websites such as the Pirate Bay.

Independent Grants Program

Selection of the new projects for 2015 was completed and the Independent Grants Panel made its recommendations for funding. These were publicly announced on 17 June. All new projects have been established in the quarter with contracts in place for all projects containing clear, achievable milestones consistent with project aims and deliverables. Substantial work was completed during the quarter to ensure outputs are achievable and that the new projects meet appropriate standards of quality and research rigour.

ACCAN continues to work on several research projects which are expected to be completed in the next quarter. The findings of a Galaxy Research survey on telecommunications complaints were published during the quarter.

Consumer Education

ACCAN strives to educate consumers effectively on telecommunications issues that affect them. During the quarter ACCAN's My Phone Rights app was relaunched with updated consumer tips, a new video guide and Auslan translations of all of the video guides. We published two consumer education pieces outlining how to choose a good value NBN plan and a tip sheet on how to get the best internet plan available. A total of 13 articles were posted on the ACCAN website in the period covering a wide variety of topics such as the Regional Telecommunications Review, ACCAN outreach, the Windows 10 upgrade, and affordable communications.

ACCAN took part in several Conferences including the ACOSS Conference, University of the 3rd Age Conference, Connecting Up Conference and COSBOA Conference.

Stakeholder Engagement

ACCAN's membership is at 214 (107 organisations and 107 individuals) representing a small drop once non-renewals are taken into account. During the quarter, under our member engagement framework, we held a Members Advisory Forum, a Small Business Advisory Forum and an Indigenous Advisory Forum. We have had regular liaison with representatives from Telstra, nbn™, Optus, Vodafone, Communications Alliance and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). ACCAN's annual meeting with Communications Compliance was held, we met with the Telecommunications Society and once again, ACCAN supported a joint internship with Google.

Our consumer representation on committees continues. ACCAN represented consumers on eight committees including the ACCC Consumer Consultative Committee, ACMA Consumer Consultative Committee, TIO Board and others.

ACCAN participated in the Cybersecurity Symposium, the Australian Network Operators Group (AUSNOG) meeting, ACCC/AER regulatory conference and the Online Copyright Infringement Scheme and Website Blocking Legislation Forum. ACCAN's Deputy CEO was a guest of Vodafone at the Trans Tasman business forum on *Communications and the Digital Economy-where to for the NBN?* ACCAN's Disability Policy Adviser travelled to the USA to attend a number of accessibility focused events. ACCAN's Deputy CEO continues to work with the IANA Co-ordination Group on the globalisation of the management key Internet identifiers (IANA).

Media

Between 1 June – 31 August 2015, ACCAN generated 108 media mentions across national print, online, TV and radio, with an average of 36 items per month. Three media releases were issued during the quarter covering the announcement of the ACCAN Grants Scheme projects for 2015, our Galaxy Research survey on telecommunications complaints and a joint *Indigenous Focus Day* held with Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA).

ACCAN contributed to discussion on important consumer issues including family sharing plans, the Copyright Amendment (Online Infringement) Bill 2015, global roaming, 1800 numbers and SMS and call termination rates.