

Quarter 1, FY19-20

The summary below outlines ACCAN's activities from 1 June – 31 August 2019.

ACCAN made fourteen submissions across the range of our policy priorities in the period 1 June – 31 August. ACCAN made representations on five other areas of advocacy including mobile phone leasing, misleading advertising, local number portability and affordable broadband. We have identified six areas where ACCAN has had an impact on outcomes for consumers, including the review of the International Mobile Roaming Standard, the Industry Guidance Note on appointing Authorised Representatives and Advocates, and the Mobile Premium Service Code Review.

In **privacy, security and online safety**, our submission to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science on Artificial Intelligence: Australia's Ethics Framework advocated for a framework that is consistent with Australians' expectations for privacy and security when using communications services.

In **improving consumer safeguards**, we made a number of submissions in relation to technical processes with the NBN. We also made a submission to the TIO Options Paper in relation to governance frameworks that reflect consumer interests. In addition, our submission to Communications Alliance in relation to the acknowledgment of Authorised Representatives advocates for a process enabling consumers to easily get assistance and representation to safeguard their interests.

Affordable communications was a key priority in our (confidential) submission to NBN's Product Development Forums pricing review paper 1. In this consultation, nbn Co proposes to introduce a targeted product for lower income households. ACCAN strongly supported this proposition with substantial evidence on the benefits of higher broadband take-up, and reiterated our policy position on affordable broadband.

ACCAN championed **better communications for poorly served areas** in a number of submissions to the NBN. We also made submissions to the WA Planning Commission on the Fibre Ready Telecommunications Infrastructure Position Statement supporting the mandated rollout of fibre in new housing developments.

We advocated for **improved accessibility** in submissions against Caption Exemption Draft Orders in order to ensure subscription television services are as accessible as other television services.

Processing of the 2019 Grants Round is now complete. All recommendations from the Independent Grants Panel were accepted by the ACCAN Board at its June meeting. Seven new projects were funded. The majority of the 2017-19 Round projects are now complete with seven of the nine projects now acquitted as well. The Board has also approved a process for the recruitment of two new members of the Independent Grants Panel, to replace outgoing members.

From 1 June - 31 August 2019, ACCAN published seven news stories and one edition of the ACCAN Quarterly Magazine.

ACCAN has 220 members, comprising 109 organisations and 111 individuals. This is a modest increase from the previous reporting period. ACCAN is continually working towards being representative of Australian communications consumers and the organisations that represent their interests. The membership base forms only one part of the methodology ACCAN uses to ensure it remains representative of the interests of communications consumers. ACCAN held its annual Disability Advisory Forum in July. The First Nations Media and ACCAN Indigenous Focus day took place during the period as well.

ACCAN continued its wide ranging representation on a range of formal committees with 22 meetings throughout the period. The new rules in the Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code were a high priority. Workshops were held in Melbourne and Sydney and engaged with stakeholders from a broad array of sectors. Similar events are being planned for other locations.

ACCAN engaged on 56 different occasions with our members and consumers groups and participated in member events. It represented consumer issues to regulators, government bodies and the Ombudsman at 29 meetings. The organisation also represented these issues at 27 different meetings and events with the industry. This engagement included 12 Focus Groups co-ordinated by ACCAN to consult consumers about the DoCA Access Hub.

ACCAN generated 473 media hits across national print, online, TV and radio. This is an average of 158 items per month. ACCAN's media coverage was marginally more reactive than proactive this quarter at 55% of media hits. This includes coverage generated through 21 media enquiries. Other major issues that ACCAN proactively provided comments to the media on included: Telstra landline price increases, the updated TCP Code, the appointment of a National Relay Service provider, the TIO's NBN telemarketing report, NBN privatisation, telco selling practices, the release of ACMA complaint data, and No Australian Left Offline/affordable broadband.

The Board met twice; on 20 June and 15 August 2019 at the ACCAN office in Sydney. The ACCAN Chairperson, several Board Directors and senior ACCAN staff represented consumers at the Industry ACOMMS Awards on 15 August in Sydney. In this period, ACCAN's NDIA funded National Disability Telecommunications Information and Referral Service with IDEAS otherwise known as the Accessible Telecoms project continued to grow and has begun its second phase for the website tools. Four new staff joined the team at ACCAN between 1 June and 31 August including a new Director of Operations.