

Quarter 3, FY14-15

Summary of ACCAN's activities from 1 December 2014 to 28 February 2015.

Consumer representation and research

ACCAN submitted eight formal submissions to government and industry consultations from December to February. These submissions focus on issues such as the NBN, deregulation, captioning, the Telecommunications Interception and Access Act, and the Copyright Code.

ACCAN highlighted the ongoing issue of 1800 number calls from mobile phones which are still being charged by some providers despite the prior agreement to make these calls free by 1 January 2015. Working with Media Access Australia and others, ACCAN joined the call for amendments to the Broadcasting Services Act which affects television captioning. ACCAN's submission on the Federal Government's data retention scheme was also significant with the bulk of our recommendations being adopted.

As always, our policy work is supported by substantial research and consultation with ACCAN members, consumers, industry representatives and government/regulatory bodies.

ACCAN Grants Scheme

Two new members were appointed to the Independent Grants Panel. The new members are highly qualified and represent the continued strength of the Scheme. The Grants Round for 2015 was opened with a [refreshed website](#) for improved navigation and usability for applicants.

Consumer education

ACCAN continues to work to educate consumers on telecommunications issues that affect them. We communicate key messages about mobile phone plans, mobile data sharing, small business communications and excess data charges.

December saw the launch of ACCAN's online [Hardship Portal](#) and its [Community Consultation Guide](#). These projects are the result of considerable work and include input from the big three telecommunications providers – Telstra, Optus and Vodafone. The Hardship Portal provides a unique one-stop-shop for people facing hardship and needing special consideration from their service provider. The *Community Consultation Guide* has useful information for communities that are facing issues with mobile coverage.

Stakeholder engagement

We have had regular liaison with representatives from Telstra, NBN Co, Optus, Vodafone, Communications Alliance, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO), the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and other relevant stakeholders.

ACCAN has attended and presented at industry events such as the [Communications Vision 2030](#) policy seminar in Canberra. Staff members attended several industry end of year functions. ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin, participated in a tour of the Telstra Global Operations Centre in Melbourne, was Telstra's guest at the Recognise Gala Dinner and also attended the Telstra CEO Roundtable.

Media

Between 1 December 2014 and 28 February 2015 ACCAN generated 181 media mentions across national print, online, TV and radio, with an average of 60 items per month. Seven media releases were issued during the quarter and ACCAN provided comments on issues such as data retention, 1800 calling costs from mobile phones, affordability and the proposed copyright notice scheme.