## a(an magazine ISSUE 25 SPRING 2017





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ACCAN is the peak organisation representing all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. Our mission is to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians.

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## Our CEO: Teresa Corbin

ur Spring Magazine coincides with the 2017 ACCANect Conference. Digital technology has transformed consumer experiences around the world. This always on, always connected world raises big questions for consumers. Over the two days at the Conference, the sessions and speakers will explore new and emerging technology with the aim of helping to find the consumer place in the connected world. We're very excited to hear consumer experiences and views on how we ensure everyone benefits from the connected world, as well as presentations on the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence and future consumer protections.

Recently, Consumer International published a report featuring ten areas needed to build consumer trust in the digital world. The Feature article for this edition explores these ten areas from an Australian consumer perspective. Areas covered include: access to services, digital inclusion, security and safety and more. No doubt the discussion and debate at the Conference will help us to expand on the ideas and approaches in the Feature article.

Also covered in this edition is a recent ACCAN survey that found 12 per cent

of consumers had received unexpected charges on their mobile phone bills in the past six months. This 12 per cent equates to almost 1.9m people when applied to the customer bases of Telstra, Optus and Vodafone, showing that many consumers are getting caught out. Read the Spotlight article for tips on how to avoid these annoying third party mobile charges.

In the Members article, you'll find out more about one of our newer members — Leep. Based in Western Sydney, Leep runs a range of digital inclusion programs that help to get vulnerable consumers online. We interviewed CEO, Cecily Michaels, to find out more about the great work Leep is doing in the community.

For all the latest ACCAN updates, follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/accanau) or Twitter (twitter.com/ACCAN\_AU). Our smartphone app, My Phone Rights, is full of useful information for communications consumers and is available on Android and Apple smartphones. As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback, please email

**ceo@accan.org.au** or call me on **02 9288 4000**.

Warm regards

**Teresa Corbin**ACCAN CEO



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MEMBERS

Helping people Leep

into the digital world
Leep is a Western Sydney-based
NGO helping to close the digital divide





ACCAN welcomed the ACCC's advertising guidance to retail service providers (RSPs) on broadband speed claims that was released in August.

The ACCC's advice to RSPs is that their marketing should focus on speed performance during busy periods.

The guidance includes suggested labels that will help consumers better understand the speeds their services will actually deliver during peak hours. The suggested labels are: basic evening speed, standard evening speed, standard plus evening speed and premium evening speed.

"At the moment consumers are unable to tell what speed they can expect | ing program later this year.

from a service during busy periods," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin.

"The ACCC has recognised the frustrations consumers experience when services don't work as advertised and expected, and is suggesting that retail providers can do better in these areas. We fully support this initiative and hope retail providers will get behind it."

In addition to the new guidance, ACCAN is supportive of the ACCC's broadband monitoring program that will be launched later in 2017. We were also pleased to hear that consumer group and ACCAN member, CHOICE. will launch its own broadband monitor-



#### **BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO DIGITAL GOVERNMENT**

A new report published by ACCAN looks at the barriers to accessing digital government services that different groups in Australia face.

The report was written by ACCAN Google Intern, Jesse Chen, who conducted interviews with representatives from regional groups, seniors groups migrant groups and others, to get different perspectives on the barriers these groups face to accessing digital govern-

"We are seeing governments around the country move services online and this raises concerns about ensuring everyone can access them," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "As 'digital first' strategies become more common we need to make sure that everyone can get access to important services.

"Working with government to ensure access to services will no doubt form a big part of ACCAN's work in the near future. The report is useful as it shows which consumer groups may be left behind in the switch to online services."

The report, Breaking down barriers to digital government, is available on the AC-CAN website:

www.accan.org.au/research



#### **AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE** LAUNCHES TO REDUCE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

still not participating online, the Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance (ADIA) was formed to help reduce the digital divide.

The Alliance was established by Infoxchange with support from Australia Post, Google and Telstra, and includes over 100 organisations with a mission to accelerate action on digital inclusion. AC-CAN is a member of the ADIA.

"The ADIA seeks to harness the col-

reduce the digital divide and enable greater social and economic participation for all Australians", said ADIA Chair, David Spriggs.

The recently launched 2017 Australian Digital Inclusion Index shows us that while digital inclusion in Australia is improving, the gap between the digital 'haves' and 'have-nots' is significant and widening.

People with low levels of income, edlective skills, knowledge and capabilities | ucation and employment, along with | Corbin.

With around three million Australians | of organisations across the country to | older Australians, people with disability, remote Indigenous communities and people in regional areas are more likely to be digitally excluded.

> "ACCAN is very pleased to be part of the ADIA as it's more important than ever to ensure that everyone can get connected and get access to essential government services and the education and employment opportunities available online." said ACCAN CEO. Teresa

#### a(can

#### 5 things you need to know about **NBN**



#### 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NBN

ACCAN developed a new consumer brochure that outlines things consumers need to know before switching to the NBN.

#### The five things consumers need to know are:

- I. NBN is not just about internet
- 2. Switching is not automatic
- 3. Retail Service Providers (RSP) sell services to consumers
- 4. Connecting is different for everyone
- 5. Services may work differently over NBN

"Most people and businesses in Australia will switch to the NBN: this can be a complex and confusing process," said ACCAN Senior Policy Adviser,

Rachel Thomas, "Our new brochure sets out aspects of the NBN and switchover process that consumers may not know about.

"For example, people may not be aware that over the NBN, their services will not work during a power outage and their existing medical alarms may not work. It's important that people are informed about the changes the NBN will bring about so they can plan their future services and arrange alternative or back up services."

The brochure is part of the Top tips for phones and internet pack which is available online (www.accan.org.au/top-tips) or in hard copy (contact ACCAN to request copies).

## Your place in the connected world >>>



#### WHAT IS IOT?

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to the technology that allows everyday consumer products to be connected to the internet. As well as computers, smartphones and tablets, a modern household is likely to have numerous internet-connected devices. These could include: smart TVs, gaming consoles, video cameras, light bulbs, power switches and much more.

ave you noticed how more and more everyday items are now connected to the internet?

While we used to have ordinary watches that told us the time and the date, we now have smartwatches that track our fitness, alert us about emails and more.

We are told that we can expect many things in our homes will be connected, our cars will be connected and we will see even more connected 'wearable' devices in the future. These new devices and services raise many questions and concerns for consumers.

These emerging new technologies have also drawn the attention of Consumers International (CI) – the international body which aims to empower and champion consumer rights. The organisation launched the Better Digital World campaign earlier this year on World Consumer Rights Day (15 March). The theme for this year was "Building a digital world consumers can trust."

While acknowledging the benefits of digital technology, CI highlighted consumer questions around:

- How to improve the quality of services
- Which online services and products can consumers trust?
- What happens to the data consumers share online?
- How to establish access to the internet for the many consumers who are not connected

ACCAN agrees that many 'Internet of Things' (IoT) devices and online services will bring benefits for consumers, but there will be challenges and a need for updated consumer protections and guarantees.

## TEN AREAS FOR BUILDING CONSUMER TRUST IN A DIGITAL WORLD

In its 'Building a digital world consumers can trust' report, Cl talks about how trust in business, government, media and non-government organisations is in decline.

The technology sector is regarded "as falling short on transparency, authenticity, contributing to the greater good, protecting consumer data and paying taxes," and an Edelman Global Trust in Tech survey found that 71 per cent of consumers worldwide think brands with access to their personal data use it unethically.

Cl's report recommends ten areas needed to build consumer trust in a digital world. In this article we will explore some of the consumer implications and concerns relating to the 'always on, always connected' world.

#### **ACCESS AND INCLUSION**

According to Cl "access to the internet is a fundamental aspect of digital consumer rights and central to development."

The 2017 Australian Digital Inclusion Index found that digital inclusion is growing in Australia. The Index gives a score on the degree to which all Australians are sharing in the social, cultural, and economic benefits of digital connection. In 2014 Australia's score was 52.7; by 2017 it had risen to 56.5. While this is positive, the researchers indicated that many are still missing out due to lack of digital connection. As more government and other services move online, it's important to ensure that all Australians have access to the internet and that services are affordable.

### DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY

Clear and simple information about products and services is key to allow consumers to make informed choices about purchases. ACCAN has previously highlighted issues around long contracts and terms of use that many consumers do not understand or even have time to read before signing up.

Consumer group and ACCAN member, CHOICE, also highlighted the need for clear and simple contracts in March 2017 when they found it would take nine hours to read the 73,198-word terms

and conditions for Amazon's Kindle product. CHOICE called on companies to stop pushing consumers to sign long, unreadable contracts.

### FAIR USE AND CLEAR OWNERSHIP

Licences and ownership of digital products is not always clear to consumers. CI notes that "with numerous links in a complex chain of manufacturers, apps [and] ISPs, it is not always clear who, for example, owns a product that relies on software, or who is responsible when something goes wrong."

Issues of ownership and access to digital assets were highlighted in the 2012 ACCAN Grants Scheme project, *Death and the Internet* which found that many online 'assets' are left exposed or stranded after the 'owner' dies. This led the researchers to conclude that more Australians should include digital registers with their wills containing passwords and account locations so that materials can be accessed.

### DIGITAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Having access to services and digital devices doesn't guarantee that all consumers can use them. Consumers need to have access to digital education and awareness programs to ensure they can take advantage of digital technology and also know about online safety and security.

There are free, online programs that are run by not-for-profit organisations, such as Infoxchange's GoDigi program, which helps consumers learn digital skills and allows people who want to help educate others to register as mentors. The Digital Age Project, funded through an ACCAN Grant in 2013, aimed to measure and understand the economic, social, and community impact of access to and use of broadband-enabled information technologies. Tailored training offered under the project resulted in improvements in important aspects of social engagement and personal confi-





dence in more than half of participants. This shows that the benefits of digital education and awareness extend beyond just being able to access online services.

#### **SECURITY AND SAFETY**

Security is a major concern for many consumers and one that sometimes stops them from interacting with online services. The 2016 CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust found that 22 per cent had made fewer online purchases and 24 per cent did fewer financial transactions as a result of concerns about their financial information being shared online. ACCAN believes that companies selling services and products online need to have clear privacy policies and be upfront and transparent about any security issues that occur. Products and services should also be designed with security and safety as a priority.

#### **DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY ONLINE**

When using digital products, often consumers do not have a choice and are reguired to give over private information (date of birth, address, phone number). Consumers should feel that their information will be adequately protected when they sign up for a service.

In order for consumers to have trust in digital services and products, companies must ensure they make information security a priority and they must be transparent when breaches occur, informing affected consumers immediately.

In Australia, the Privacy Act regulates the handling of personal information about individuals and sets out the Australian Privacy Principals which outline how most Australian and Norfolk Island Government agencies, all private sector and not-for-profit organisations with an annual turnover of more than \$3 million, all private health service providers and some small businesses must handle, use and manage personal information.

In 2016, the Australian Government introduced mandatory data breach notification laws into Parliament, Under the laws, organisations that determine they have been breached or have lost data will need to report the incident, and notify customers that are directly impacted or "at risk." While this is positive, companies should still strive to ensure that privacy breaches do not occur in the first place.

#### **REDRESS AND COMPLAINT HANDLING**

Internet Of Things

My garage lights off

My midge #1

My fridge #2 •

It's important that consumers have somewhere to turn to make complaints about products or services when something goes wrong.

With the advent of new online services and IoT devices, sometimes it's not clear who consumers can make complaints to. Generally, Australian consumers can make complaints about products or services under the Australian Consumer Law. The ACCC recommends first making a complaint to the business. If the issue is not resolved by the business, consumers can contact their state or territory consumer protection agency.

#### **COMPETITION AND CHOICE**

Competition for digital services and products will deliver better results for

coffee m... no coff consumers in terms of price and choice. Competition may also drive improvements in products and services offered to consumers. It's important for the government and regulators to ensure competitive markets are maintained for the benefit of consumers.

> Recently, the Productivity Commission released a draft report on data availability and use. ACCAN is supportive of the Commission's draft report and the ways it proposes to empower consumers to have more control over data about them. ACCAN believes increasing the availability and use of data across the private and public sectors, and to individual consumers about themselves, there is potential to stimulate innovation and competitiveness in the marketplace, which could lead to increased choice and better decision making for consumers.

#### **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

As more services move online and new IoT devices become more prevalent, we must ensure that the regulatory framework keeps up with the times and adequate consumer protections are in place. CI states that the "international nature of the digital economy also presents real challenges for regulators." The organisation goes on to state that it took 33 years to update the OECD Privacy Guidelines, which is in stark contrast to the rate at which new technologies can reach audiences. For example, Facebook reached 50 million people in just one year.

Governments should work to ensure that consumer protections and guarantees are up to date so that consumers can have confidence and trust in the digital world.

#### **RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS** CONDUCT

CI states that in addition to traditional responsible business practices, companies at the forefront of digital technology should be open and transparent about the risks and benefits of their innovations. Consumers should be able to trust that companies will be upfront and open with them, do the right thing and will take a proactive approach to addressing consumer concerns, mistakes, security and safety.

#### CONCLUSION

Digital technology has transformed consumer experiences around the world. We anticipate that this transformation will continue and it's clear that ACCAN has a role in ensuring that consumers are represented in important discussions with government, regulators and industry players about future consumer protections and guarantees for digital and IoT products and services.

## How safe are loT devices?

onsumers are increasingly buying Internet-connected appliances for their homes. Often referred to as the Internet of Things (IoT), the range of internet-connected products already available includes not only the obvious things like Smart TVs, gaming consoles, security and safety cameras, but smart light bulbs, dishwashers and more.

Telstra says the average home already has 11 or 12 connected devices and predicts that by 2020 a typical home will have about 30.

As well as being useful by enabling us to remotely manage our home environments, many of these devices also collect a lot of data. Conceivably, this data collection can pose huge risks to | They found that: consumers' privacy and security.

To find out more about possible threats to privacy and security, researchers from the University of NSW profiled some real devices available in the market with the aim of developing materials to educate consumers and inform policy-makers on the risks associated with widespread adoption of IoT. The project was funded under the ACCAN Grants Scheme.

#### **BENEFITS COME WITH RISKS**

The report produced by the researchers, Inside job: Security and privacy threats for smart-home IoT devices, found that we now rely on connected devices in our everyday lives. These devices save us money and time, help us stay fit, healthy and safe and allow us to communicate effectively with friends and family.

But with these benefits there are also risks. The project found that consumer-focused IoT devices are susceptible to attack by those wishing to do us harm, or simply to just make mischief.

Many internet-connected devices | consumers many productivity and lifehave poor in-built security measures that make them vulnerable, and these flaws have the potential to reveal private data and information that may further hurt or alarm us.

A typical smarthome with many IoT devices is under significant risk of cyber-attack, or may in turn form part of an attack on other internet-connected sites or systems.

#### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

The researchers tested 20 IoT devices, including cameras, motion sensors, smoke alarms, printers, light bulbs and a connected talking doll.

- Five of the devices did not retain data in encrypted form, making it easy for intruders to snoop on user information.
- Four of the devices allowed attackers to manipulate them so they could run fake commands, and two of the webcams tested had weak passwords, making them easy to hack.
- More than half the devices tested could be rendered dysfunctional after being bombarded with a high volume of attack traffic.
- Most of the devices tested could be manipulated in some way to participate in attacks on other devices.

The results showed that all of the IoT devices tested have at least some level of vulnerability to attack.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The rapidly increasing demand for IoT devices poses many security and privacy issues. Internet-connected devices will soon become commonplace in homes and businesses, and will offer tralian marketplace.

style benefits.

The testing suggests that many current IoT devices are vulnerable to attacks in a number of ways. Hackers can use quite unsophisticated technology and methods to gain access to personal data within IoT devices from anywhere in the world. They can also use simple, everyday consumer items to create powerful reflection attacks on other internet networks and systems.

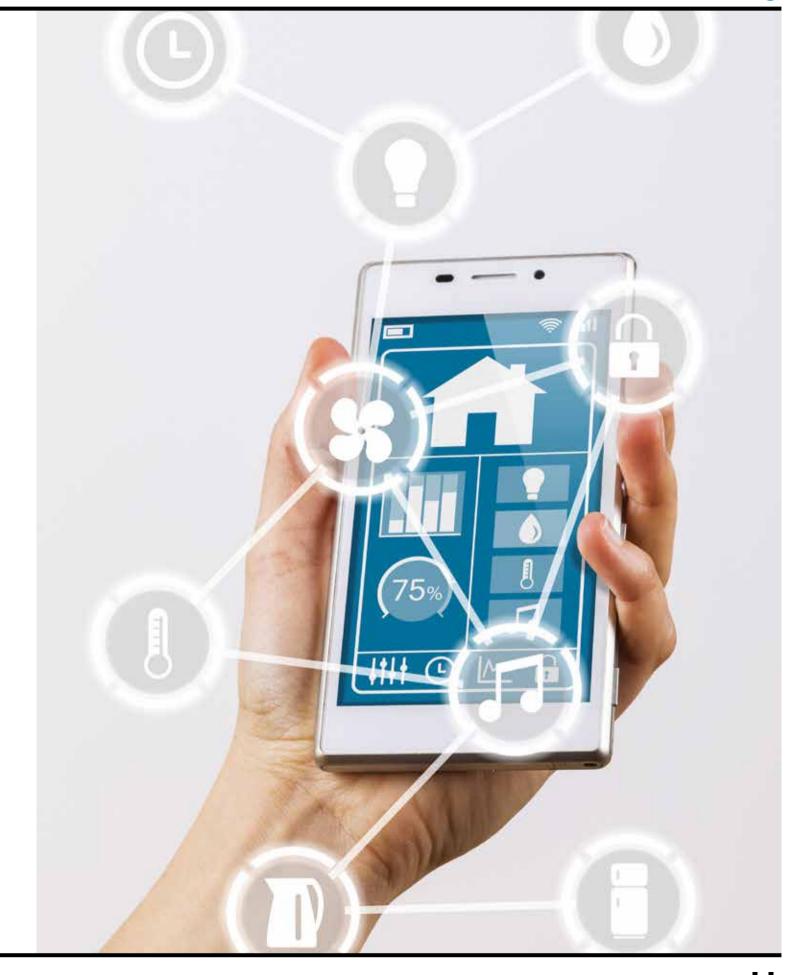
It's a complex problem, and there doesn't appear to be any simple solutions to make IoT devices safer and more secure. Currently, there is no basic set of agreed security standards or one body in Australia that is capable of overseeing the industry as a whole. A further risk with such a fast-moving sector is that basic acceptable standards might become obsolete as quickly as they are established.

The present IoT environment raises many unresolved questions for consumers, manufacturers, regulators and insurers. Of particular concern is whether the cost of regulation and insurance will stifle innovation in the IoT industry.

It is apparent that consumers will demand greater levels of security and privacy from their IoT devices once they are more aware of the potential risks.

This project, in conjunction with anecdotal evidence in the media, clearly exposes the large-scale lack of security in smarthome IoT devices.

It is hoped that the findings will begin a dialogue between consumers, suppliers, regulators and insurers of IoT devices to develop appropriate methods to tackle the problem. The project has already facilitated more rigorous security testing in the Aus-



Spring 2017

# Unexpected mobile charges may be costing consumers millions

ave you received a text message telling you that you have subscribed to a service and will be charged a fee for that service? They usually tell you how much it will cost and ask you to reply STOP to cancel the subscription.

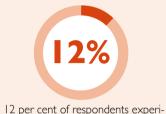
These messages don't come from your telco and may result in charges being added to your phone bill. These charges are for third party services which means your telco is allowing another provider to sell content to you which you pay for on your phone bill. What you are buying can be apps, pay per view videos, games and other content. They can be one-off charges or ongoing subscriptions.

With an estimated 1.9 million people experiencing unexpected charges and about half of our survey respondents being unaware of third party billing, ACCAN believes there should be stronger consumer protections, such as default barring of third party charging, and better consumer information around third party billing. We called for these changes in our submission to the review of the Mobile Premium Services Code, which regulates third party charges.

If people want to charge items to their phone bill they should have to actively change their settings with their telco, rather than having to ask their telco to bar these services.

As of late August 2017, Optus is still allowing one-off and third party subscription services. Telstra will stop allowing third party subscriptions from 3 December, 2017; Vodafone stopped allowing sub-

ACCAN's recent survey on third party charges found that:



enced unexpected third party mobile

charges in the last six months.

\$20 MILLION

When applied to the number of Australian adults who are with Telstra, Optus or Vodafone, this 12 per cent could mean as many as 1.9m adults received unexpected charges and potentially were collectively charged as much as \$20m.



49%

Over a third (36 per cent) of these reported unexpected charges were for \$10 or more.

49% of respondents were unaware they could have third party services charged to their phone bills.

scriptions in 2015. Despite these changes, Telstra and Vodafone customers could still get stung by one-off third party charges.

## WHAT TO DO IT YOU FIND UNEXPECTED CHARGES ON YOUR PHONE BILL

If you find these charges on your bill or receive a text message you should:

#### **UNSUBSCRIBE**

- If you have a website link to the content, go to the website and cancel the subscription in the account or settings section.
- Reply 'STOP' to the number you are receiving messages from about the content.
- Call the content provider's helpline. This should be listed in any messages

you are receiving or on the provider's website. If it's a 19 number, you can find contact details on the 19 SMS website by entering the 19 number.

 Ask your telco to block ALL third party billing on your account to avoid further charges.

#### **ASK FOR A REFUND**

- If you did not subscribe to these services, you should first request a refund from the content provider.
- If you are unable to get in touch with the content provider take your complaint to your telco.
- If you are unsatisfied with the response from your telco you can raise your complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

## Lack of information about disability telco equipment

CCAN has a strong membership base of disability organisations and individuals with disability. The most consistent feedback we get from these members relates to the lack of available information about telecommunications equipment and services for people with disability.

While there is a growing number of new and emerging telecommunications products which can improve access and participation for people with disability, without information about these products and how to access them, people with disability will continue to be left behind.

Over the past several years, Telstra and Optus have retired their formal consultation meetings with the disability sector and earlier in 2017 the Government scaled back the scope of the National Relay Service Outreach program.

Additionally, Communications Alliance, the industry association, has flagged the Information On Accessibility Features for Telephone Equipment Code to be downgraded to an industry guideline, which means it will no longer be enforceable.

If people with disability are to benefit from new and emerging mainstream and assistive communications products and services it is imperative that easy access to appropriate awareness, information, training and ongoing support is available from telecommunications providers.

### DISABILITY MYSTERY SHOPPING

In December 2016, ACCAN commissioned a mystery shopping project to test telcos to see exactly what level of information about accessible equipment for people with disability is available.



The aim of the project specifically assessed the information provided by staff in telco customer service stores and through phone customer support lines and compare the current study to results from a mirror mystery shopping investigation conducted during April 2014.

The project comprised 100 walk-in visits to telco stores and 100 phone calls to customer support lines. The targeted providers were Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, TPG and iiNet. Each mystery shopper was provided with a specific enquiry and scenario to follow during their visit or call, made up of a number of typical enquiries by, or on behalf of, people with disabilities.

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The mystery shopping survey was scored in line with how many services the staff member could mention in accordance with the specific scenario. The mystery shoppers were provided with a list of products and services currently available from the telco or in reference to the law.

The average achievement rate across multiple providers for walk-in assess-

ments was 26 per cent, while the average achievement rate for phone call assessments was just 16 per cent.

When compared to the 2014 results, there has been a two per cent drop in overall achievement from 2014 to 2016.

Overall, the amount of assessments that resulted in no information being provided was 50 per cent. This is a nine per cent increase on 2014 results.

Disappointingly, the 2016 results were no better than those from the 2014 project. In some cases they were worse.

In 2016 no company performed significantly better or worse than any other. The results for each company surveyed supported our anecdotal reports on access to information about telecommunications products and services for consumers with disability — that it is very difficult to get information from telco sales staff.

ACCAN has shared these results with the telcos and has begun discussions about how to quickly address this major gap in information about telecommunications products and services for people with disabilities.

## Helping people Leep into the digital world

he 2017 Australian Digital Inclusion Index showed that overall digital inclusion is growing in Australia.

Since 2014, when data was first collected for the Index, Australia's overall digital inclusion score has improved by 3.8 points, from 52.7 to 56.5.

The Index also found that gaps between digitally included and excluded Australians are "substantial and widening."

One organisation that is helping to close the digital divide is Leep. The organisation runs digital inclusion programs, training and events, creates resources and supports organisations to create programs that help people get online.

We spoke to CEO, Cecily Michaels, to learn more about barriers to getting connected and the work Leep is doing to give disadvantaged individuals the skills they need to get online.

#### **Barriers to getting connected**

Through its work Leep has identified a range of barriers to getting online, from access, to skills and trust issues.

"A main barrier to people accessing digital devices on a regular basis is cost and the lack of disposable income to purchase them," said Ms Michaels.

"This also applies to home internet connections as the need to pay a monthly internet bill is outweighed by other household expenses."

Other access issues include a lack of available public devices and Wi-Fi services, lack of accessible devices for people with a disability and lack of skills to use technology.

"Whilst access to technology is often considered the primary barrier to being

online, many fail to consider the fact that those who are digitally excluded may not have the skills necessary to use devices." added Ms Michaels.

"Fear of the internet and the threats to privacy and security that it might present is another reason people present to us as to why they avoid being online. Others believe that they have nothing to gain from being online."

As technology becomes more central to our everyday lives, Leep recognises that new risks will emerge from our state of constant connectivity and digitisation.

"The emergence of the Internet of Things, internet connectivity being built into everyday items such as kitchen appliances, cars and children's toys, along with the digitisation of personal data such as health and financial records, has raised new security and privacy threats," said Ms Michaels.

"These threats have been exemplified through the recent phenomenon of global hacking and ransomware attacks.

"We believe that by participating in programs with a familiar and trusted environment, such as our Leep in Lab, people discover how to protect their privacy and stay safe online."

#### **The Leep in Lab and Network**

Leep works with individuals experiencing disadvantage and underserved communities to help bring them online and enable them to participate in the digital world through a range of programs.

One of these programs is the Leep in Lab which is an on-site digital mentoring program where volunteer digital mentors provide free one-on-one support to help people learn how to use their devices (laptop, computer, phone or tablet) and the internet.

The Lab runs four hours a week and mentors run a topic-based technology workshop once a fortnight. Previous workshop topics include Skype and how to manage digital photos.

"Our Lab has developed a vibrant social environment, where learners and mentors sit, chat, have a cup of tea and a bikky and explore technology together," said Ms Michaels.

In 2016, the Leep in Network was launched. The Network is a social and digital inclusion movement that brings community partners from across NSW together to combine efforts in bridging the digital divide. The network is open to partners who provide existing support (from free Wi-Fi and public computers to training and support services) and partners who are creating new dig-

ital learning opportunities based on the digital mentoring model.

"Leep supports community organisations, businesses and councils to create programs like the Leep in Lab by providing advice, a toolkit of resources and help recruiting and training volunteer mentors," added Ms Michaels.

"We have hosted network events, such as our most recent forum in Blacktown; 'Imagine Tomorrow Together: Creating Digital Communities,' where over 100 stakeholders including learners, mentors, service providers, advocates and experts came together to discuss the future of digital inclusion in Australia and run practical workshops on providing digital mentoring programs."

For more information on Leep and their digital inclusion work, check out their website: **www.leep.ngo** 



