

Infrastructure Australia report highlights need to act on telco affordability

A report released today by the nation's independent infrastructure advisor, Infrastructure Australia, affirms ACCAN's position that home broadband is unaffordable for many households.

As Australia's voice for phone and internet users, ACCAN has highlighted the need for more affordable home broadband options for Australian consumers. The *2019 Australian Infrastructure Audit* supports this view, describing telecommunications as essential to participating in society, however noting that there are "challenges that must be overcome to ensure that no Australian is left behind in the digital world, in terms of digital literacy, access and affordability."

"Infrastructure Australia's report highlights that 91% of all data consumed by Australian households is on fixed broadband," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "However, their own research also says that 44% of Australians rate fixed broadband as costly."

The infrastructure advisor's audit also revealed that 1 in 10 adults did not access the internet at least once in the six months leading to May 2018.

"If Australians are being left offline due to the cost of accessing broadband services, it's not just individuals who are negatively affected. The nation as a whole suffers because we lose out on the economic and productivity benefits that come along with a connected country," said Ms Corbin.

Support for affordable broadband is growing across Australia, with more than 16 consumer advocate and not-for-profit groups now backing ACCAN's *No Australian Left Offline* initiative including The Smith Family, Anglicare Australia, ACOSS, and Uniting Care Australia. Voices from within the telco industry have also spoken about the need for lower wholesale broadband prices across Australia.

ACCAN considers that a 50 mbps unlimited broadband service offered at a wholesale price of \$20 per month by NBN Co to households receiving government financial support to be the most effective way to achieve affordable broadband for all. This would mean eligible households would pay approximately \$30 per month for unlimited broadband – almost halving the current average cost.

"With the NBN roll-out almost complete, now is the time to take action and cut the cost of communications for Australians."