

## Australians lose \$15M per year to missed NBN appointments

Missed NBN appointments are costing Australians over \$15 million per year in lost time, according to analysis from the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN).

The staggering financial impact of NBN Co's 320 missed appointments per day<sup>1</sup> was revealed in ACCAN's response to the ACCC's draft decision on the NBN wholesale service standards inquiry.

"We know that the process of connecting to the NBN or getting a fault fixed can be a real pain point for people," said ACCAN Director of Policy, Una Lawrence. "Not only do you have the inconvenience of taking time off from work to wait for a contractor, but there's no guarantee they'll turn up on time or at all."

The estimated cost to consumers is calculated using [economic modelling commissioned by ACCAN](#) from Synergy Economics. This shows that individual's time wasted per missed NBN Co appointment is valued at \$150<sup>2</sup>.

"This is simply not good enough," said Ms Lawrence. "It's unfair for every day Australians to bear the cost of unreliable NBN practices."

As the consumer voice for phone and internet users in Australia, ACCAN has repeatedly advocated for greater reliability safeguards that meet the needs of households and businesses now and in the future. This requires a rethink of existing customer service guarantees for connection and fault rectification timeframes, and for network reliability to be expanded to include fixed broadband services.

"We strongly support the ACCC's proposals in its draft decision because they recognise the fundamental problem of a monopoly wholesale provider being able to set its own terms, which at times do not deliver for the community and small businesses - but we think they could go further," said Ms Lawrence.

The ACCC is proposing increasing the rebate for missed NBN Co appointments to \$75. ACCAN would like to see this amount increased to a minimum of \$100 to better reflect the costs faced by consumers.

ACCAN is supportive of the ACCC's proposed introduction of rebates on underperforming services. However, ACCAN considers this rebate should increase to \$30 a month for any service that is not reaching speeds consistent with the baseline expectation of 25 mbps for an NBN service.

While the ACCC is to be applauded for their efforts to highlight the need for financial compensation for poor service standards, clear arrangements are needed to ensure telco retailers pass these onto their customers. As consumers are the ones who suffer when NBN fails to provide reliable services, ACCAN is urging the ACCC to ensure these rebates are automatically passed through to households.

"Given that we are the ones being inconvenienced when NBN services are unreliable, there need to be robust arrangements in place to make sure the refunds are passed on to consumers by their telcos," explained Ms Lawrence.

Other positive recommendations outlined in the ACCC's draft decision include the introduction of NBN record-keeping and reporting requirements about appointments, connections and faults against performance benchmarks. This proposal would provide clear accountability as to who is responsible when performance falls short - NBN Co or the telco.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/nbn-co-technicians-now-missing-469-appointments-a-day-523214>

<sup>2</sup> [Synergies Economics, Please Hold: Costing Telco Customer Wait Times \(2019\) p43.](#)

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