

## Some consumers still paying for 1800 number calls from their mobiles

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is disappointed to learn that a number of Australian telcos have yet to make all 1800 number calls free from mobile phones for consumers (see below for list). It's now well past the 1 January, 2015 delivery date proposed by the telco industry to implement this change, with the blessing of the ACMA. Previously ACCAN noted that consumers would hold the industry [to its commitments](#) in regard to 1800 numbers.

"Six weeks past the delivery date the number of telcos that have yet to implement this change is disappointing," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. "It's unfair for some consumers who are still paying for mobile calls to 1800 numbers which are used by essential services like Centrelink, financial counsellors, and drug, alcohol and mental health services. These organisations are keen to let their clients know they can call their 1800 contact numbers for free."

"Recent statistics show that consumers are increasingly reliant on mobile phones for communicating. Many businesses and organisations use 1800 numbers because they are free to call for their customers. Now that mobiles are the dominant form of communication we're just asking that these free calls be extended to mobile."

"The cost of calling a 1800 number from a mobile phone is really prohibitive for many low income consumers," said Fiona Guthrie, Executive Director of [Financial Counselling Australia](#). "Waiting on the phone to talk to Centrelink for example quickly chews through a person's credit. It is of huge concern to us if people are unable to contact service providers and miss out on vital information or assistance."

On a more positive note, eight telcos have confirmed to ACCAN that they have made calls to 1800 numbers free for their mobile phone customers, including the big two - Telstra and Optus. The other telcos are: amaysim, Virgin, iiNet, Spintel, Jeenee Mobile and Boost Mobile.

"It's good news that these telcos have made the switch so that 1800 calls are finally free for their mobile customers. ACCAN has been working with industry to achieve this outcome since 2010 and we're urging all mobile telcos to follow the lead by making 1800 number calls free for all Australian mobile consumers in the near future," added Ms. Corbin.

The telcos listed below have failed to make 1800 number calls free of charge on all mobile plans. Consumers should check the call rate for 1800 numbers on their individual plans and if they remain costly look for alternative means of contacting businesses and organisations that use 1800 numbers. Some of these organisations can instead be contacted through websites, social media and apps.

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*The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.*

**The telcos that haven't implemented free calls to 1800 numbers from all mobile phone plans are (accurate as of 13 February, 2015):**

Vodafone
TPG
Dodo
Vaya
Yatango
Cmobile
Live Connected
Bendigo Bank Telco
Hello Mobile
GoTalk
Lebara Mobile
AldiMobile

ACCAN would strongly encourage any initiatives from industry and the ACMA to achieve the goal of uniform free calls to 1800 numbers from mobile phones.

For more information, please contact Luke Sutton on 0409 966 931 or [luke.sutton@accan.org.au](mailto:luke.sutton@accan.org.au).

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