

Telco reliability framework remains a work in progress: ACCAN

Telco customers will benefit from clearer communication from their providers; however, further efforts will be needed to protect consumers against unreliable telco services, according to the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN).

Released today, the Morrison Government's *Consumer Safeguards Review Part B* report provides a high-level framework that aims to address reliability issues of telco services at the wholesale and retail level.

As Australia's peak body representing telecommunications consumers, ACCAN has welcomed the report's recommendation to introduce mandatory wholesale connection, fault repair and appointment keeping rules and associated benchmarks during 2020.

"Having a clear framework that makes it easy to understand when consumers can expect issues with their phone or internet service to be fixed is an important first step," said ACCAN Director of Policy, Una Lawrence. "However, more needs to be done to recognise the impact of unreliable telco services on consumers.

"If you are waiting for a technician or tradesperson to come to your house to fix an issue and they miss the scheduled appointment, you should be automatically compensated for your time."

ACCAN has also highlighted the high level of care that must be taken should the existing Priority Assistance arrangements for medically vulnerable consumers be amended.

Priority Assistance is designed to provide reliability safeguards to people with a life-threatening medical condition. It provides faster fault repairs, shorter time to connect new services and a more reliable service.

"While there is merit in exploring different technological options to deliver Priority Assistance, our main concern is that these customers have a reliable connection."

ACCAN looks forward to the release of further detailed proposals that build upon the framework of recommendations outlined in the *Consumer Safeguards Review Part B* report.

As the consumer voice for phone and internet consumers in Australia, ACCAN will continue to work with the Government, industry and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that Australians are adequately protected when it comes to reliable telecommunications services.