



Media Release

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ACCAN highlights need for service standards to Joint Standing Committee on NBN

The [Australian Communications Consumer Action Network](#) (ACCAN) appeared before the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network in Melbourne today to highlight the need for service standards and to present solutions to problems faced by consumers in the NBN rollout.

“It is fair to say that for a number of consumers the rollout has not been seamless,” said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. “The NBN is a large project that affects most Australians. The problems faced by consumers have been wide ranging from confusion and misconceptions about what NBN is, to overcoming difficulties in getting and using services.

“To ensure services meet consumer needs, both in the medium and long term, access to a network needs to be guaranteed in legislation. The service and underlying network also need to meet customer service standards. The responsibilities for the network provider and the retailers need to be clear. This would help to stop the finger pointing about who is to blame when services are not working and get resolutions more quickly for consumers.”

Greater transparency and accountability is also required about service performance. Communication services are now essential, and if there is an outage or the service is not working properly, consumers need to know why. The ACCC’s [broadband performance monitoring program](#) is a significant step forward, but it should be expanded beyond the fixed-line network to include satellite and fixed wireless technologies as well.

Switching to the NBN means telecommunication services will work differently to how they have in the past. Consumers may need to change how they use some services and need to be aware of things like power outages which may disrupt services.

“It is important that consumers get information about the possible impact, and are fully aware of what it means for them. The switching process needs to be as streamlined as possible for consumers,” added Ms Corbin.

ACCAN also raised concerns about accessibility and affordability barriers that may be excluding some consumers from benefiting from the NBN.

“All consumers should have access to NBN services and be confident using them. Access to telecommunications should not come at the expense of other important services and products for low-income consumers,” said Ms Corbin.

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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 NBN has the potential to improve productivity, enhance social interactions and empower citizens. It is vital that we ensure this is happening as the rollout continues and address problems as they arise to ensure Australians get the most out of the opportunities offered by broadband.

ACCAN's submission and the [full list of 15 recommendations](#) can be found on our website.

For more information, contact Luke Sutton on luke.sutton@accan.org.au or 0409 966 931. For the latest updates, follow ACCAN on [Twitter](#) or like us on [Facebook](#).

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