

## Youth research highlights need to address internet affordability

New research from the National Youth Commission of Australia (NYC) highlights the need to urgently address internet affordability, according to the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN).

The NYC's Inquiry into Youth Employment and Transitions Interim Findings Report shows that limited access to technology, insufficient digital literacy and a lack of affordable internet services are limiting opportunities for the nation's young people.

"The National Youth Commission's research points to case study after case study that demonstrates the real-life impacts that not being online can have," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin.

"Without access to the internet and the digital literacy skills to navigate online, young people are simply unable to engage with government services to get the help they need."

Ms Corbin said that the COVID-19 pandemic had shone a light on the digital divide.

"When we're asking millions of people to work and study remotely, we need to make sure that they actually have the ability and means to get online."

"While many young people use their mobile phones to access the internet, as the National Youth Commission's report shows, data costs can quickly add up," said Ms Corbin.

"Fixed-line connections like the nbn are far more cost effective than mobile data, however there is a much higher entry cost. We need to make sure that young people aren't being locked out of signing up to these connections because of these barriers."

As the voice for phone and internet consumers, ACCAN is calling on NBN Co to continue their COVID-19 Education Assistance Package beyond 30 September 2020 and to extend the offer to more Australians in need. The Package provides up to \$50 million to assist phone and internet providers to support low-income family households with school-aged children who do not currently have an active nbn connection at home.

"Nbn's offer has been a game-changer for families with school-aged children. For thousands of families, it has meant that they can connect to a home broadband services for the first time and can reliably take part in video calls and engage with online learning."

ACCAN would like to see NBN Co to extend their assistance package to all households that receive income support.

"With everything from healthcare to education to government services now moving online, everyone needs access to affordable home broadband services. This is the time to take action to make sure that there is no Australian left offline."