

ACCAN media release

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“Accessibility must be built into online government services”

ACCAN has called for accessibility measures to be built into the federal government’s online platforms, interactive web sites and its information technology procurement policy.

ACCAN made the call as the federal government released its *Access to Electronic Media for the Hearing and Vision Impaired: Approaches for Consideration* discussion report which seeks public consultation to improve access to electronic media for people with hearing and vision impairments.

Allan Asher, CEO of ACCAN said the initiative was a step in the right direction but the government needed to go further.

“It’s one thing for the government to release information and generate discussion but that alone won’t work unless specific measures are put in place to allow disadvantaged communities including people with disabilities to navigate, use and get services to where they are needed,” he said.

“ACCAN believes the establishment of an independent Disability Equipment Program will go a long way to allow consumers with disabilities to participate in government activities over the internet.

“The government should use accessibility criteria in its procurement to enable its employees with disabilities to fully participate in Gov2.0 and should also make online services more accessible by using technology that meets the needs of people with disabilities.

“We live in the era of e-Government where governments around the world including the Australia’s provide information, services and interactive consultation spaces, online. In Australia, close to one in five people has a disability and this rate is increasing. Therefore it is essential that people with disabilities have the necessary tools to fully participate in civic society.

“Right now the federal government has an excellent opportunity to take a giant leap forward in making its online services accessible to people with disabilities,” he said.

Mr Asher said there was a whole raft of other challenges that need to be addressed to make technology accessible to disadvantaged communities.

“For instance the indigenous community in regional and rural Australia still struggle to gain access to technology infrastructure, consistent reliability and affordable services,” he said.

About ACCAN

ACCAN (Australian Communications Consumer Action Network) is Australia's new communications consumer watchdog. ACCAN’s purpose is to improve consumer advocacy, undertake research and analysis from a consumer perspective and make the market work for communications consumers. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Australian government.

ACCAN's recommendations can be found in the [ACCAN Gov2.0 Roundtable Issue Paper](#).

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