

ACCAN media release

For immediate release: 18 December 2009

“Structural separation remains the goal”

Any agreement between Telstra and the NBN Co must be exposed to public scrutiny and doesn't remove the need for the structural separation of Telstra, said ACCAN, Australia's peak communications consumer organisation.

ACCAN CEO Allan Asher said the whole country had a stake in the future of the broadband network.

“The community has lost its confidence in Telstra, so an agreement that isn't explicit, that doesn't tie Telstra into definite time frames and that doesn't have a clear schedule for reducing Telstra market dominance, won't be accepted by the community.

“Telstra's structural separation remains an essential prerequisite for an innovative, vibrant and competitive communications sector.

“Market reform is needed now, Australia can't wait another five years. Any agreement should not hand over to Telstra continued market dominance.

“The pressure isn't off Telstra or the government and the community is looking for a solution to the high prices and poor service that plague the telecommunication industry,” he said.

ACCAN urged the government to renew its commitment to the vital consumer protection elements of the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer Safeguards) Bill.

“We want assurances that the government will extend the Universal Service Obligation and measures that provide for better consumer protection are legislated,” Mr Asher said.

“The national broadband network is coming and we need to get the environment right to make sure it delivers the best possible communications outcomes,” he said.

ENDS

Media contact: Joan Dharamdas, Tel: 9288-4000 or Mobile: 0409966931
Email: Joan.Dharamdas@accan.org.au Website: www.accan.org.au

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.