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Around 900,000 Australian households still don't have in-home internet

The affordability and availability of broadband services in Australia has remained a significant problem for many vulnerable communities and people on low incomes. Despite an increase in remote learning, telehealth services and work from home arrangements in the last two years there are still approximately 900,000 Australian households who do not have an in-home internet connection.¹

Launching its latest policy position “The Future of Broadband,” the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is warning that enduring provisions to safeguard the interests of Australians are needed to protect consumers. Since the National Broadband Network was declared ‘built’ by the Federal Government in 2020, Australians have endured lockdowns, natural disasters and more recently, significant increases to the cost of living.

“Such experiences have highlighted just how essential communications technologies are, and how important it is that these technologies are reliable, resilient, and affordable. According to our research, 57% of Australians on lower incomes experience some difficulty paying for broadband services at home.² This is unacceptable in a country as wealthy as ours,” said ACCAN CEO, Andrew Williams.

“To ensure that the interests of all Australian consumers are protected, there are a number of conditions that need to be met across all fixed broadband networks to ensure that everyone can get and stay connected, not just those who can afford to pay for it,” he said.

This would include transparent reporting around hardship arrangements, disconnections, and localised network performance as well as establishing a subsidised broadband service. Telco’s must also provide standard customer service guarantees which protect households from poor customer service such as not keeping appointments.

ACCAN is also calling for providers of Public Wi-Fi and Public Interest Programs to expand their services based on community needs, so that people can access the internet regardless of their circumstances.

“There’s currently no regulated reliability framework for broadband networks. Creating such a framework would help to address some of the reliability issues experienced by consumers, particularly if broadband networks were required to report on their reliability performance. Extending this reporting requirement to the retail sector would bring the telco sector into line with other utilities like

¹ Based on the latest figures from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (2021) [How we use the internet](#) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) [Snapshot of Australia](#).

² ACCAN (2021) [Addressing Telecommunications Affordability: Evaluating Support for Low Income Consumers](#)

gas, electricity and water, and would give people greater confidence when it comes to choosing the right provider for them,” said Mr. Williams.

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak communication 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.
